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CONTEST - ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

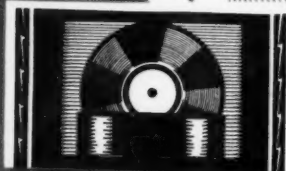
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Portrait — ARTHUR FIEDLER

RECORD NOTES & REVIEWS - OVERTONES

COLLECTORS' CORNER - SWING MUSIC NOTES - ETC.

Edited by
PETER HUGH REED



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With sincere regards
Arthur Fells

Henderson

THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



All Worthwhile Recordings Reviewed

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Frontispiece: Prominent Musical Personalities — Past and Present
No. 30 — Arthur Fiedler

SCRIABIN AND HIS MUSIC

A QUARTER CENTURY SINCE HIS DEATH

PAUL ROSENFELD

I.

"**A** RUSSIAN'S PLAYING HIS CRAZY MUSIC in Bechstein Hall to-night," my friend the "Times" man told me. We were following my baggage through the gloomy railway shed, 'longside the panting train. It just had brought me from Fishguard to London, that raw evening in the March of 1914. "I've got to cover the shindig," he added. "Meet me there and we'll go on to some night-clubs."

"Do they let you in without tails?" I eagerly enquired. Gentle reader, it was not on Bechstein Hall and its management my young mind nervously was centered! The reason was neither inordinate craving for bright-lights in this stiff, stupendous London, nor indifference to the art of tone. It was the simple circumstance that recitals of new music in those days promised me exactly nothing.

Music had come to an end for me with César Franck: none more recent than his had any attraction. Gazing from New York at the bourne of the art beyond the horizon—it was Europe—I'd seen an empty day; and reasoned that the conditions propitious to musical renewal had passed forever from the world. Strauss, Reger, Mahler, were the expiring gasps. (The American foreground wasn't even taken into view.) I was a member of the New York musical public—that was all. We weren't very much, had remained stuck on Wagner, and characteristically trailed Europe by some five and twenty years. Little of the newer music, moreover, had been played for us: Bronx cheers from the watchtowers saluted the efforts of the Boston Symphony to enrich the repertory. When Dr. Fiedler gave d'Indy's *B-flat Symphony*, our Mr. Henderson expanded upon the acidity of its seconds and thirteenthths and mocked "the cultivated city opposite Cape Cod" for having asked for a repetition of the work. When Dr. Muck performed *Ma mère l'oye*, our Mr. Finck remarked, "It's by Ravel, thus it's like

Debussy." *La Mer* was "seasick-music": even Strauss, Reger and Mahler were performed in quantities sufficient only for the revelation of their theatricalities and banalities. We were colossally "the provinces".—That season, the Flonzaleys had presented an important experiment, the Schoenberg *D minor Quartet*. The sad feeling had persisted.

Nevertheless, as I took my place by the correspondent in the meeting-house-like concert room that misty night, I was in something of suspense. Passing to the half-empty stalls, I'd been surprised by the fact of the presence in the final rows of a crowd whose like I'd never seen in Aeolian Hall. This one was shabby in used waterproofs and scarves, and radiant and young. Composed of tightly-packed-in young fellows and girls, it had the appearance of a deputation from some riper Greenwich Village, and it gazed intently at the platform—where patiently was sitting the composer of the "crazy" music. A trifle enviously I took it in. It was my generation—and alive. But the composer was beginning. I glanced at the "programme". Chopinesque titles constituted the bulk of it: preludes, mazurkas, etudes, fantasies, with opus numbers below 50. Preludes and poems flanked by numerals in the 60's figured at the bottom. The whole was surmounted with the unfamiliar name of *Alexandre Scriabin*.

Minutes passed. The ears I'd brought with me, less than half-open as they were to musical experience, received at the outset only dull impressions; distinguished only the lustrous piano-style of the romantics and epigrammatic compositions apparently not dissimilar to pieces by Chopin and by Schumann. Suddenly, quite unexpectedly, they took in with pleasure freshly dissonant material. Kin still to that of Chopin and of Liszt, this plainly was in advance of theirs, a definite offshoot aglow with strange rich harmonies. I turned to my program. The opus-number was in the high 'teens. Less distinguished substance

followed; and again a strong, compact little composition, audacious in point of rhythm and harmony, magnificent and strange. Again I consulted my bill. The opus-number proved to be an even higher one. Growth in power and individuality was evident to me. For the first time I stared at the platform.

The type, comic to my American eyes, of the excessively fastidious East-European momentarily grew plain in the small forty-odd-year-old form at the piano. Ever so elegant were the carefully-trimmed, doubtless perfumed, brown-gold Van Dyck beard, the mustache-ends twirled into diminutive boar-tusks, the Parisian cut of the tailcoat, the glint of orient pearl from the shirtfront. Promptly, some sensitiveness in the appearance, possibly the fine modelling of the features, the noble shape of the white forehead, the proud carriage of the head, individualized this prissy little Russian gentlenian. Certain'y his manner of performance was the least assuming, wellnigh shyest hitherto seen by me. Theatricalism, disconnection, rigidities of head and torso, arms and hands, at no moment drew attention to his person, sought to impress the audience, impose the music. Of a hieratic pose and the implications of false mysticism infused into his music by certain of its recent interpreters, there positively was no sign. Scriabin sat quietly, fluently playing, with a touch somewhat cool but with a subtle style, pieces which almost appeared to be playing themselves through his finger-tips. Musical values alone seemed to be his objective: if any personal feeling transpired, it was that of an involuntary remoteness. During the applause—oftentimes cordial but never wild, provided mainly by the pit—he politely smiled; not so much to himself as to some imperceptible idea. Politely bowing, he looked preoccupied and quite alone.

The "Crazy" Music

The music for some time had been hovering, shimmering, at the limits of the ancient frontiers, when suddenly the "Times" man whispered "Here it comes, now!" The "crazy" music! Instantly a new piece launched me into untrodden, fantastically odd regions of tonality. Fabulous parrot-like beings seemed to be talking to one another in some mysterious woodland: so bewildering was the first effect of impressionistic vagueness of key-signature and desuetude of the major and the minor modes! Laughter rose in gusts from the sedate audience: the hysterical, half-jeering laughter of sudden disequilibrium later familiarized to us by the first performance of



every "atonal" Strawinsky, Varèse, Schoenberg work. My correspondent-friend was bent double and shook silently. I wasn't happy, either: the music was strangely eerie, elusive, a mass of blurred sensations. Still, to me as to many another member of that audience, it proved instantaneously more convincing than any other "ultra-modern" music—a logical development from the past, I felt; and, tense, I strove to follow the capricious, flighted movement; certain that comprehension would provide delights. The free tonal region where it sported seemed the inevitable one.

A mild demonstration was in progress when slowly I put on my coat. Some of the London Bohemians had stayed in the rapidly clearing hall: they were calling and, in one or two instances, jeering while Scriabin not insensibly made his last acknowledgements. I was silent: what was clearly perceptible to me was an intuition, the fruit of the chance invitation, floating as it were close before my mental eye. Entirely new to me and amazing, it was the feeling that music by no means had reached the term of her evolution. With confidence in my own time of life, I looked into invisible reaches at the very moment secreting creative newcomers and the future's sounding speech.

II.

That this first of my many experiences making for confidence in the toughness of spirit in this world was a consequence of the piano music of the composer the twenty-fifth anniversary of whose death we commemorate this April, scarcely was an accident. Doubtless the impulse of the young deputation and the impact of the composer's personality helped bring the experience about: but Scriabin's music in itself was supremely qualified to cause it. Beautifully, with rare consistency of texture and the individual glamor of now capriciously fluid, now broadly chanting melodies that seemed to rise winglike from golden invisible tides, it represented a tradition most familiar to me—the sensuous tradition of Chopin, of Liszt, of the international nineteenth-century pianoforte composers — and simultaneously harmonized with the most contemporary life. At the same time, it had independently overturned the tyranny of the Germanic system and conventions, which unknown to me were weighing upon the musical impulse of my own country. And its intuitive content which, personal to Scriabin, had caused this Russian to cast off the Germanic shackles, was a feeling that scarcely could help infecting with courage and exultation even as unconscious and undirected a listener as I was.

Parallels

What is meant is: despite his development of an unusual capacity for combining rhythms and melodic wisps that gave his work almost contrapuntal contours, Scriabin's style essentially was the harmonic one. His piano work's magic lies in what has been called its "subtle beauty of resonance", the "accurate complexity of its rhythmic patterns", above all in its exquisite harmonic textures. The audacious works of his last period, when he evolved whole compositions out of fresh, extended chords which fitted the peculiar feelings he wished to express, are ultimately experiments in harmony and color. The resemblance between his music and Chopin's always remains a real one, flowing—the observation is Katherine Heyman's—from a manner of momentarily arresting the movement of pieces in static, "balancing" passages, which Scriabin derived from or shared with the great Pole. An example of this temporary stasis or "balance" in Chopin is in the *D minor Prelude Op. 24*. In Scriabin it is instanced by many passages where he subtly changes his meter for a beat—say from a pattern of 5 against 3 to one of 4 against 3—before announcing new mate-

rial and essaying a fresh flight. The fourth of the *Etudes, Op. 8* immediately comes to mind.

Still, "bits filched from Chopin's *trousseau*", Cèsar Cui's characterization of the earlier Scriabin preludes and études, even at the moment it was made was inaccurate; and as a description of the whole of Scriabin's work is ludicrous. Possibly less varied than Chopin's experience, Scriabin's from the first was more energetic than his predecessor's, and continued increasingly to surpass it in vigor and forcefulness. Not alone is there a majesty of expressive tone, a Russian clangor to Scriabin's music that contrasts with the sonority of Chopin's as iron does with silver. Its style is swift. Scriabin's recapitulations are never literal, often daringly condensed. He had the Russian concision; and the obsessive rhythmical figures that become tedious in places in Chopin's piano sonatas rarely or almost never have their parallels in Scriabin. The left hand, too, is far less subsidiary to the right in the Russian; the inner voices freer and richer. Not even Liszt sounds fuller: certainly no composer used the piano-trill more luminously. And leonine and exalted moods alternate with wonderfully tender, fugitive ones.

Differences

The difference was the difference of the composers' times: the beginning new century was rife with activity and vigor. But energy was not the only characteristic of Scriabin's style. It was his intuitive content—creative energy itself, Eros the creator if one will, in any circumstance desire directed towards an immaterial, possibly divine object and projecting new people and new worlds. Certain earlier pieces, to the *B minor Fantasy*, represent it semi-consciously in images of the states of creativity in which the artists' will seems to him harmonious with the vow of earth, and the psyche feels generating in her depths the power that comforts and convinces. The *Fantasy* for example reflects the evolution of such a state from a condition of passive enchantment and lyricism to that of active possession of direction and consciousness of objective. The flighted, bounding third subject in which Pegasus appears to rear—one of the vigorously *volando* themes whose alchemy Scriabin outstandingly possessed—is the very image of motor impulse, determined will, creative activity. Quite the antithesis, indeed of the preliminary prancings of Rachmaninoff, the passages of ostentatious winding-up from which no ball proceeds across the plate! Then

in the *Fourth Sonata* and definitely in the *Fifth*—whose recordings we herewith contentedly note*—the force beneath the creative state itself became the implication, the content of the style. To Scriabin maturely had come consciousness of what possessed him in his sovereign hours, knowledge that their joy was an aspect of creative power. Atop the *Fifth Sonata* he set the epigram

I summon you to life,

Mysterious forces, submerged in hidden depths
Of the Creator-Spirit, Timorous outlines
Of life, I bring audacity to you!

The sonata, like its successors and the orchestral poems, is a myth, an ikon, symbolic of the internal generative forces as it passes through mortals in the aspiration which motivates it, rendering them momentary portions of superindividual wholes, transporting them among the gods; and a challenge no less than an ikon and a myth. Let it not be thought Scriabin at the last was merely a music-maker! Music had become for him a means of communicating powers dormant in his own and the human unconscious, a virile moral of energy, an ethic of fervor, an exaltation of the life of man. It was in seeking the means for this communication that he shattered the Germanic conventions!

III.

At the very moment Scriabin, almost inevitably it would appear, gave me my first faith in the toughness of spirit in my time, the prestige of this rare artist actually was approaching its peak. His Russian following had been greatly augmented by the championship of himself and his music on Serge Koussevitzky's part onwards from 1910. The orchestral concerts and pianoforte recitals devoted to him in London that season of 1914 were forming the large body of his English adherents. The fame continued swelling in the years immediately subsequent to Scriabin's untimely death in 1915; books on his personality and art appeared in Russian, German, English. Despite the miserable butchery of *Prometheus* with the color-organ here in New York, his work along with other "modern" music began making headway in America, too: Leo Ornstein, Katherine Heyman, even Harold Bauer on one occasion, played Scriabin sonatas. Then in the mid-twenties the acceleration began slackening.

There had been a slight social change in Russia. Paris, still the spiritual center of the

western world, also did not enjoy Scriabin. Unaware that he had anticipated Stravinsky not only harmonically but in points of orchestral technique, Paris dubbed *Le Poème de l'Extase* "bad Stravinsky". The truth was, the musical practice prevalent in Scriabin's lifetime had changed under the impetus of Mahler, Busoni and most of all Stravinsky from the harmonic to the melodic. Counterpoint being considered the means best capable of solving musical problems, the young composers felt that Scriabin had little or nothing to teach them. In 1930 the only composer who might still be considered building out from Scriabin was Dane Rudhyar. Moreover the age weakly adored the hard-boiled—and the color of Scriabin's sensibility had been romantic. The spirit of sex suffused his art: arch-romantic, too, had been his idea of the fundamental unity of all the senses, and his consequent project—it was to have been realized in the *Mysterium* on which he was at work when he perished of blood-poisoning—of associating coloristic and olfactory as well as verbal expressions with his music.

His Coming Vogue

But "in music we know how fashions end": to-morrow may well be Scriabin's hour. He never had his hour: he was neglected before having been fully known. Yet all along his work has been acquiring gifted and devoted adherents. That one or two of them, attracted by his informal theosophy and Gunst's theosophical interpretations of his musical ideas, have on occasions infused into their recitals of Scriabin the atmosphere of seances and performed the music not only as though he had been seeking contact with "elementals" while he composed, but as though they themselves were seeking it while they played, of course is regrettable. Still they too have helped keep his music alive before a sophisticated public. And when his hour strikes, he will figure on piano-programs, we believe, quite as Chopin now does. In much of his work there is that which defies time; the essence of beauty, the glamor of genius, the limpid expression of profound layers of the personality. If his main orchestral pieces, particularly *The Divine Poem* and *The Poem of Ecstasy*, suffer from prolixities, his subtle and powerful last sonatas, the formidable *Eighth*, the sinister *Ninth*, the supersensual *Tenth*, belong with heroic pianoforte music. The world has need of his faith in the unity of life and human effort, the feeling of the inner generative force, his independence of spirit, and, it would seem, must find him for itself.

* Sonata No. 4 in F major, Op. 30. FRM disc No. 20. Sonata No. 5, Op. 53. FRM discs 26/27. Both played by Katherine Ruth Heyman.

What wellnigh persuades us his hour is close, among other circumstances, is that of the publication of the impression of his *Fifth Sonata*, certainly the most important Scriabin record ever placed before the public. The performer is his most inspired interpreter, the artist who has placed all Scriabin lovers forever in her debt, Katherine Ruth Heyman. There have been other important impressions of Scriabin's piano music: Grace Castagnetta's record of the gorgeous *B minor Fantasy*, a prodigious rendition of what effectually is a piece for three hands; and Katherine Heyman's luminous record of the limpid, lyrical *Fourth Sonata* of the characteristically corymbatic coda. Besides, the records of études from Opp. 2, 8 and 10, and preludes from Op. 11 by Grégoire Gourevitch, Muriel Kerr, Anatole Kitain and Alexander Brailowsky* accurately display the concision and richness of his workmanship in the smaller forms. Yet even though it sports a key-signature, the *Fifth Sonata* is more individual a piece than the *Fantasy*, with the latter's passages of fine but somewhat Lisztian writing; also it deploys and exploits its lyrical and often-times majestic material more broadly and variedly than does the ecstatic little *Fourth*. According to Dr. A. E. Hull, even though the harmonic innovations in the piece are achieved along the old lines, "they extend to formations as advanced as those used in *Prometheus*". Numbers of the chords are built up in fourths; nowhere does a full harmonic cadence figure. Dr. C. S. Terry, for his part, considered the *Fifth* the finest of Scriabin's sonatas.

The Fifth Sonata

The scheme of this characteristically rapturous, economically wrought and symbolic work is Beethovenesque. A slow introductory section, impetuous and later languid, precedes the exposition of the first theme, which begins in measure 48. The bridge sets in in bar 68 and exposes a new subject. The lyrical first of the pair of second subjects is heard with bar 120; then the second. The codetta

follows; and the Introduction recurs for some thirty measures. 140 bars long, the development initially involves the "bridge" theme and the first subject, then the introduction and following it the latter of the pair of second subjects in alternation with the former of them. The climax is reached with a development of the first theme and the two secondary ones. The recapitulation, which is some 70 measures long, combines the first theme with a part of the "bridge" and recalls the "bridge" subject and the two second themes. The coda is an enlargement of the codetta: at the last the impetuous passage from the introduction fleetingly returns.

In the record, only the exalted final statement, just previous to the commencement of the coda, of the lyrical first of the two secondary themes, a little disappoints: it ought to glitter like glass struck by the sun. But the sonata's rhythmically intricate structure perfectly emerges; and the modelling of the lyrical passages, and the bell-like depth of the tones particularly in the statements and developments of the theme in the "bridge", are almost prodigious.

Such a sonata in such a performance, promising as it does the acquisition of many new partisans to Scriabin, is an earnest of the coming of his day.

A NEW LIEDER ALBUM BY ELENA GERHARDT

Owing to a great number of requests from all over the world, Elena Gerhardt has made another album of lieder recordings, with Gerald Moore at the piano. Her selections, drawn from Brahms, Schubert and Wolf, comprise the following songs: BRAHMS: *Acht Zigeunerlieder*; *Der Tod das ist die hühle Nacht*; *Der Gang zum Liebchen*; and *Therese*; SCHUBERT: *Die Stadt*; *Dithyrambe*; *Wiegenlied*; *Ellens zweiter Gesang*; WOLF: *Der Mond hat eine schwere Klag' erhoben*; and *Und willst Du Deinen Liebsten sterben sehen*.

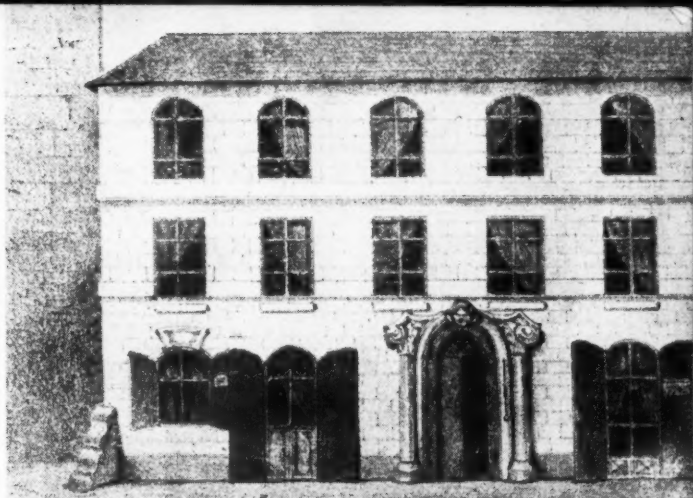
The songs occupy six discs, each of which is numbered and personally signed by the singer. A book of German words and English translations is included with the album. The records have been produced by H. M. V. Gramophone Co., Ltd. The price of the complete album is \$50.00, payable on application. The album is entitled "New Selection of Songs, 1939, by Elena Gerhardt."

* *Fantasy in B minor*, Op. 28; Grace Castagnetta. Timely disc 1308. *Etude in C sharp minor*, Op. 2; and *Etude in D flat major*, Op. 8, No. 10; Muriel Kerr. Victor disc 4113. *Etude*, Op. 10, No. 6; *Prelude*, Op. 11, No. 20; and *Etude*, Op. 8, No. 7; Grégoire Gourevitch. Pathé X9958. *Etude*, Op. 8, No. 2; and *Two Preludes*, Op. 10, Nos. 11 and 14; Gourevitch. Pathé X9957. *Prelude*, Op. 11, No. 10; and *Etude*, Op. 8, No. 12; Alexander Brailowsky. Polydor 95142. *Etude*, Op. 2, No. 1; and *Prelude*, Op. 11, No. 2; Anatole Kitain. Columbia 69569.

The house where
Mozart died in
Vienna

THE MOZART REQUIEM

A. VEINUS *



THE HISTORY OF THE *Requiem* BY MOZART, the last work by one of the greatest masters in the whole history of music, is fraught with controversy and speculation, with double forgery and questionable commercial transactions, which are distinctly out of harmony with the unquestionable greatness of the music. In July of 1791 (the last year of Mozart's life) Mozart received a commission for a *Requiem* via an agent who refused to reveal the identity of the person he was representing. A payment was made in advance (which the Mozart family, considering their difficult financial circumstances, must have found very welcome) and more was promised. Some twenty or thirty miles south of Vienna, a Count Wallsegg maintained a private orchestra which performed music which the Count claimed to have written. The Count's wife dying early in 1791, the Count produced a *Requiem* in honor of her memory which brought him great fame. The Count's manuscript (still in existence) bore the inscription: *Requiem composed by Count Wallsegg. After Mozart's death in December 1791, the Requiem, which had been his last work, was performed in honor of his memory, and both the Count's and Mozart's Requiem were discovered to be one and the same work.* Wallsegg's practice of commissioning, via an agent, works by distinguished composers and passing them off as his own, constitutes the first forgery in connection with the Mozart *Requiem*.

If Mozart had been unhindered in his work on the *Requiem*, the story would end at this

point, and scholars for the succeeding 150 years would have been deprived of an excellent subject about which to quarrel and split hairs. However, Mozart found himself under the necessity of a journey to Prague on a matter concerning the composition of his *Titus*, and upon his return from Prague the initial production of the *Magic Flute* (September 30, 1791) made first claim upon his attention. The initial performance over, Mozart got to work on the *Requiem*; but the few weeks of life that remained to this incomparable composer were insufficient for the completion of this giant work. Yet the work is complete, and there is every documentary reason to believe that it was finished after his death, by Süssmayr, one of his pupils. The question of how much of the *Requiem* is Mozart, and how much Süssmayr will perhaps never be answered to everyone's satisfaction, unless additional documentary evidence is discovered. However, to the extent that we have documentary evidence, the circumstances surrounding the completion of the *Requiem* seem to be the following:

Mozart's widow, fearing either that a refund of the money already paid by Wallsegg would be demanded, or that the additional money promised for the completion of the *Requiem* would not be forthcoming, turned to several composers with a request to bring the work to completion. The original Mozart manuscript shows that an attempt at completion was first made by Joseph Eybler (whose additions to the manuscript are more extensive than is generally supposed). Süssmayr, who ultimately completed the *Requiem*, apparently made no use of Eybler's suggestions. It would seem that the original manuscripts would reveal a difference in handwriting, which would decisively differentiate the parts written by Mozart from those later added by Eybler or

* This essay also appears as the notes with RCA-Victor set M-649—a complete recording of the Mozart "Requiem," by the Choral Society of the University of Pennsylvania, and the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction Harl McDonald (See Review Sections).

Süssmayr, his pupils. However, the pupils not only learned the master's musical style, but were able to imitate his handwriting so expertly that a decision as to which is which, is almost impossible to arrive at. The original Mozart manuscript does show pencil marks ringed around Eybler's work drawn by the Abbé Stadler (musical advisor to Mozart's widow) with Stadler's inscription to the effect that "everything not encircled in pencil is in Mozart's handwriting until page 32." But it is quite clear that even Stadler had difficulty distinguishing one handwriting from another.

The history of the controversy waged among scholars for the past century and a half concerning the authenticity of this or that portion of the *Requiem* is rather beside the point in this limited space. It is worth recording, however, that in 1800 when Breitkopf and Härtel, engaged in preparing an edition of the *Requiem*, became aware of the rumors of Süssmayr's authorship, they wrote to him asking for a statement. Süssmayr's reply (February 8, 1800) claimed "the greater part" of the *Requiem* as "my work"; but, although the publishing firm printed his letter, his claim was discredited on the ground that he was incapable of creating such music.

The Authentic Parts

It would be wise at this point to list the portions of the *Requiem* known to have been composed by Mozart, so that the reader may focus his attention upon those remaining portions of the work which are under sharpest dispute. The entire of the first portion of the *Requiem* (record sides 1 and 2) is known to be Mozart. In the *Dies Irae*, the whole of the voice parts and the bass ('cellos and basses), a good deal of the 1st violin part and a few measures of the 2nd violin and viola parts, are Mozart. In the *Tuba Mirum*: the whole of the voice parts and of the bass ('cellos, basses), some of the 1st and 2nd violin, and the first 18 measures of the trombone. In the *Rex tremendae*: whole of the voice parts and of the figured bass for organ, 'cellos and basses; and the whole of the 1st violin part with the exception of bars 20 and 21. In the *Recordare*: the whole of the voice parts and of the bass ('cello, bass); the whole of the part for basset horns, and a good deal of the remaining string part. In the *Confutatus*: the whole of the voice parts and of the figured bass for organ, 'cello and basses; some of the 1st violin and a few measures of the basset horn and bassoon parts. In the *Lacrymosa*: the voice parts, and the bass (unfigured) for organ, 'cellos and basses. In the *Domine Jesu*:

the whole of the voice parts and of the figured bass for organ, 'cellos and basses; and portions of the 1st and 2nd violin parts. In the *Hostias*: the whole of the voice parts and of the bass (unfigured) for organ, 'cellos and basses; and portions of the 1st and 2nd violin parts. At the end of bar 54 of the *Hostias* Mozart wrote the direction: "Quam olim Da capo," and Süssmayr accordingly repeated the Fugue *Quam olim Abrahæ* from the preceding movement.*

Up to this point, it is clear that Süssmayr's share in the *Requiem* consisted solely in filling in the gaps in the instrumentation, the basic and the largest portion of the music having already been composed by Mozart. However, for the three remaining sections of the *Requiem* (the *Sanctus*, the *Benedictus* and the *Agnus Dei*), no original manuscripts by Mozart have been discovered, and it is Süssmayr's claim to have composed them entire. It is, therefore, upon the last three movements that the reader, interested in this problem, must focus his attention.

The Doubtful Sections

The music contained in *Sanctus*, the *Benedictus* and the *Agnus Dei* is, beyond doubt, superb; indeed, it is music of such supreme beauty that it has been difficult to credit its creation to anyone other than Mozart. Since there is no proof that Süssmayr did not compose this part of the *Requiem*, there are at least two distinct conclusions which can be drawn: either Süssmayr is an incomparably greater composer than anyone has hitherto imagined, or else he had detailed instructions from Mozart concerning the completion of the *Requiem*. Since the two alternatives are not mutually exclusive, there may be a good deal of truth in both. With regard to the latter, we learn from a vivid description of Mozart's last hours, rendered by Sophie Haibel in a letter to Georg Nikolaus Nissen (April 7, 1825)** that Mozart and Süssmayr discussed the completion of the *Requiem*. The letter reads in part: "Süssmayr was at Mozart's bedside. The well-known *Requiem* lay on the quilt and Mozart was explaining to him how, in his opinion, he ought to finish it, when he

* For a detailed account of the precise measures which Mozart left to be instrumentated see C. B. Oldman's notes to W. Watson's: *An Astounding Forgery in "Music and Letters,"* January, 1927.

** Sophie Haibel was the younger sister of Mozart's widow, Constanze. The letter was written to von Nissen, Constanze's second husband, who, at the time, was collecting materials for his biography of Mozart.

was gone." This presents a very likely solution. "The only way out of the difficulty," writes Watson, "lies in the possibility that Süssmayr, having been much with Mozart during his last illness, may either have obtained sketches for the later portions of the work, or may have heard them played by Mozart, and so have remembered them sufficiently to write them down. But in any case, the musical ability shown in his part throughout the work is of the highest order, and makes us regret that we do not know more of him." This last sentence is important, for too many scholars have based their judgment of the authorship of the disputed portions of the *Requiem* upon the unqualified assumption of Süssmayr's total mediocrity. The contention that Süssmayr was incapable of writing such superb music, "must be founded," as Einstein writes, "upon a truer investigation into the church music of Süssmayr than has up to now been undertaken."

The matter must rest here. If the reader of these notes should find himself overly disturbed by the question of the authorship of the final portions of the *Requiem*, he is offered, for whatever it is worth, the consolation of a German critic (Marx): "Well, if these are not by Mozart, then he is a Mozart who wrote them."

OVERTONES

■ We are given to understand that Heifetz recorded Beethoven's *Violin Concerto* with Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra on March 11. It is rumored that Gladys Swarthout, Rosa Ponselle, and Grace Moore will be represented by album sets (record recitals) in Victor's extensive catalogue shortly. . . that the Dorian String Quartet has recorded works of Arthur Foote and Aaron Copland for Columbia . . . that Mitropolous and the Minneapolis Symphony have recorded Franck's *Symphony*.

Magazzini Musicale, an Italian recording society, has issued a complete recording of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (12 discs in album with libretto and illustrated notes). The set is priced in Italy at L. 420, which at the present rate of exchange with duty added should make the set cost about \$27.00. The cast of the opera is as follows: *Orfeo*, E. De Franceschi (baritone); *Primo Pastore*, E. Lombardi (tenor); *Secondo Pastore*, G. Manacchini (baritone); *Caronte* and *Plutone*, A. Marone (basso); *Apollo*, G. Manacchini; *La Musica* and *Euridice*, G. Vivante (soprano); *Ninfa*, V. Pa-

lombini (soprano); *Messaggera*, E. Nicolai (mezzo-soprano); *Speranza* and *Proserpina*, V. Palombini. Chorus and Orchestra with harpsichord and organ, direction Ferruccio Calusio.

Magazzini Musicale has also recently issued the following discs of old Italian music: MARCELLO: *Concerto in D minor* (trans. by Bach for harpsichord); R. Gerlin (disc No. 9); SACCHINI: *Sonata in F major*; R. Gerlin (disc 10); GALUPPI: *Sonata in D minor*; R. Gerlin (disc 11); GIOVANNI PLACIDO RUTINI: *Sonata in A major*; R. Gerlin (disc 12); and DOMENICO SCARLATTI: *Four Sonatas*, Longo 97, 79, 24, 105; R. Gerlin (disc 13).

New English Releases

BACH: *Third Suite in D Major*; Weingartner and Paris Conservatory Orch. Columbia discs LX874/6.

HANDEL-HALVORSEN: *Sarabande with Variations*; Frederick Grinke (violin) and Watson Forbes (viola). Decca K917.

MENDELSSOHN: *Cello Sonata in D, Op. 58, No. 2*; William Pleeth and Margaret Good. Decca K918/21.

MOZART: *Sonata in A minor, K.316*; Artur Schnabel. H.M.V. DB3778/80.

MOZART: *Overtures to Figaro and The Seraglio*; Dresden State Opera Orch., dir. Böhm. H.M.V. DB4692.

PUCCINI: *Mme. Butterfly* (Complete Opera) with Toti Dal Monte, Beniamino Gigli, Mario Basiola, Chorus and Orch. of the Royal Opera House, Rome; dir. de Fabritiis. H.M.V. 3859/74.

SCHUBERT: *Impromptu, Op. 90, No. 4*; Eileen Joyce. Parlophone E11440.

SCHUMANN: *Arabeske, Op. 18*; Louis Kentner. Columbia DB1903.

STRAUSS: *Cäcilie*, and *Morgen*; Jussi Björling. H.M.V. DA1704.

TSCHAIKOWSKY: *Fifth Symphony*; Beecham and London Phil. Orch. Col. LX869/73.

VERDI: *Otello—Iago's Creed*; and GOUNOD: *Faust—Even Bravest Heart*; Dennis Noble. H.M.V. C3153.

SCHOOL OF ENGLISH CHURCH MUSIC. The Choir of the same, with Sir Sydney Nicholson at the organ. Ten 12-inch discs, ROX 191-200.

New Italian Releases

VERDI: *Requiem Mass*; sung by Beniamino Gigli, Maria Caniglia, Ebe Stignani, Ezio Pinza, with Chorus and Orchestra of the Teatro Reale, Rome, direction Tullio Serafin. H.M.V. DB3875/84.

DONIZETTI: *String Quartet in D major*; Roma Quartet. H.M.V. DB4649/50.

PAGANINI: *Variazione sulla quarta corda*; and *La campanella*; Ruggiero Ricci. H.M.V. DA4619.

* * *

With more and more Americans evincing interest in the activities of their local symphonic groups, Columbia is out campaigning for native orchestras. Besides the Minneapolis Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, and the Cleveland Orchestra, Columbia announces the signing of the Pittsburgh Symphony, under Fritz Reiner, on exclusive contract. Since Reiner is a celebrated Wagnerian conductor it can be assumed that a number of Wagner works will be recorded by him.

* * *

Victor announces a series of a new type of

recorded entertainment; the innovation is typified by a new album of *Americana in Verse* (Set P-16), where on three 10-inch discs is paraded the nonsense and sophisticated whimsicality of Ogden Nash and Newman Levy as recited in character by the Koralites—a group of three men and three women. Then there is an album of *Musical Portraits* by Alec Templeton, containing among other things *Famous American Crooner Sings Brünnhilde's Battle Cry*, and *Opera Presentation of South of the Border*. Besides the above two, there are albums of Johann Strauss' *Waltzes* (Set P-14); *Dinner Music—Famous Serenades* (Set P-12); *Opera in English* (Set P-13); and *Tschaikowsky Program* (Set P-15).

RECORD COLLECTORS CORNER

R. E. HIGGINS AND L. HEVINGHAM-ROOT

From time to time Mr. Moses, who writes our Record Collectors Corner, has invited readers to contribute articles of any length on aspects of the collector's hobby with which they are particularly familiar. The following contribution was recently sent to him from Australia. It deals with an old catalogue which the writers recently discovered, and contains some interesting information for collectors. If readers feel that they have any stories that will interest the record collector they are invited to submit them.—Editor.

■ The discovery in Melbourne recently of a copy of the *Internationaler Catalog von Zon-O-Phone Records*, June 1903, warrants an article in The Record Collectors' Corner if only to announce the number and title of a record by no less a celebrity than Mme. Rose Caron, as well as of a previously unknown disc by Mme. Calvé.

For so early a period in gramophonic history the catalogue lists a very large number of records. These vary in size and are divided into two classes—standard discs 7 inches in diameter, priced at two and a half marks; and concert discs 9 inches in diameter, at four marks, and 10 inches in diameter, five marks. Instrumental recordings are numerous, but they are mostly items of a popular genre. Besides bands and orchestras the following solo

instruments are listed: cornet, trombone, trumpet, hunting horns, sudraphone, clarinet, flute, oboe, ocarina, piccolo, banjo, concertina, mandolin, zither, violin, viola d'amore, piano, hand-organ, orchestrion, xylophone and musical bottles. Quite a comprehensive if somewhat amusing list in which the notable absentees, for the time, are the cello, viola and harp.

The catalogue consists of 84 pages, concluding with reproductions of portraits of Sarah Bernhardt, Marcella Sembrich, Anna Held, and Edouard de Reszke together with their comments on the excellence of Zonophone reproduction on records.

Vocal records are divided—one could scarcely say classified, since the division is too inconsistent to be called classification—according to nationality or language, sometimes of the song and sometimes of the artist. Hence we find Francisco, for instance, listed as Mr., Sgr., Sig., in various sections of the lists (though why he should be Mr. Francisco when he sings opera and Sig. Francisco when he sing *Home, Sweet Home* is a mystery one cannot hope to fathom). The language divisions, quoted exactly, are as follows: Français, Flemand et Wallon, Italiano, English, Deutsch, Oesterreichisch, Schweizerisch, Española, Hollandisch, Schwedisch, Russisch, Serbisch, Bohmisch, Kroatisch, Slovenisch,

Polnisch, Magyarul, Portugeisich, Hebraisch... The titling of the records is also most inconsistent. In many cases it is of the briefest (e. g. Francisco and Mme. Chalia 9567 Mignon) and the name of the composer is rarely given. In other cases a fairly full title is given, as in the concert records of Kurz, Slezak, and Nebe. This want of detail lends a definite spice of uncertainty to the lists, and one is sometimes left wondering what really was on the disc! Even in the days of 1903 collectors had no lack of whistling records, laughing songs, comic songs, descriptive scenes, and dramatic recitations (including Jean Coquelin), for they were all represented in the catalogue. However, those who sought to dance to the gramophone would have found but little.

As to the artists: Rose Caron and Emma Calvé head the list. Of the others, the most important are Francisco, Affire (Affre?), Coquelin, Whitehill, Kurz, Slezak, and Nebe. Listed below are all the titles of these artists in the catalogue, with the exception of Nebe, many of whose selections were of negligible importance. And if this catalogue, which lists the lower priced discs, contains such fine artists, who were the artists who contributed to two other catalogues mentioned? We know that Pol Plançon, Caruso, Tetrizzini, and Kate Cove were among them, but listen to this (quoted from page 78):

"Besides the records quoted in this catalogue we issue *two additional catalogues* [italics ours]. . . One of records with orange labels, which are of the premier artists of the first Opera Houses in all the various capitals of Europe. The orange label records are of concert size, and the price is M.6, 50. [six and a half marks] each. . . The other catalogue of records is with blue labels, and consists only of very choice artists of world renowned fame. The records are of concert size and the price is M.10. each."

In the list that follows the quaint phrasing and odd errors of spelling and titling have been copied exactly from the catalogue.

INTERNATIONALER CATALOG VON ZON-OPHONE RECORDS, JUNI 1903.

Standard records 7 inches diameter. Preis M. 2,50.

Mme. Rose Caron 11823 Printemps nouveau
Mr. Affire 11640 Comme la plume au vent (Rigoletto)

Mr. Francisco 5909 Chanson du Toreador, also duets with Mme. Chalia 9564 La Croix 9567 Mignon

Mr. Jean Coquelin, Paris 11848 Fragments

from Cyrano de Bergerac (Rostand) (Recit Dramatiques)

Sgr. Francisco 1592 Non e ver 1593 Aria Dinorah 1596 Di Provenza 9513 Evening Star 9739 El Balen

Sigr. di Paoli, Milano. 10605 Pozzo fa lo pre-vete 10606 Don Saverio 10607 Pardon [N.B. Classed as baritone, so not Antonio.]

Mr. Clarence Whitehill 9691 Atto Quarto di Filipo 9689 Last night

Sgra. Chalia e Sgr. Francisco 9566 La ci darem

Sig. Francisco 9512 Holy Night 9515 Home sweet home

Selma Kurz 10902 Standchen von Brahms 10903 Lockruf auf Ruckauf 10904 Die Lustige von Marchesi

Carl Nebe numerous items of which the following are the most important. . . 110 Isis and Osiris 111 In diesen heiligen Hallen 973 Ungeduld (Schubert) 985 Am Meer (Schubert) 989 Standchen (Schubert) 11261 Keine Ruh bei Tag und Nacht (Don Juan) 11262 Der Asra (Rubenstein) 11263 Ein Schutz bin ich (Das Nachtlager in Grenada) 11272 Porterlied

Sig. Francisco 1524 La Paloma 1525 El Cafe de Puerto Rico 1526 Cabellero del Gracia 1527 La Cocina 1528 Bolero del matadore 1529 Linda mia 1530 La Bayames 1531 La Serenata (Schubert) 1594 A la luna 1595 Mexican National Anthem

Concert Records 9 inches diameter M.4.—, 10 inches diameter M.5.—.

Declamations Mr. Jean Coquelin, Paris. X-2105 Napoleon 11 (Victor Hugo) X-2106 Le Chasse (Grenet-Dancourt)

Mme. Emma Calvé X-2033 Cavalleria Rusticana (Mascagni)

Sgr. Francisco X-548 Largo al factotum X-545 Pro Peccatis (latino) both 9 ins. diam. [One of the rare instances where diam. is specifically mentioned]

Selma Kurz X-1668 Styrienne a. Mignon v. Thomas X-1669 Arie der Elvira aus Ernani, Verdi X-1670 Pagenarie aus Hugenotten von Meyerbeer

Leo Slezak X-1665 Recitativ und Arie aus Bajazzo X-1666 In Lenz (Eugen Hil-dach) X-1667 Flich' o flich' aus der Oper Manon (Massenet)

Carl Nebe X-30 Die Beiden Grenadiere (Robert Schumann) X-32 Gebet aus Lohengrin (Richard Wagner)

Sr. Francisco X-518 Consejos

RECENT RECORD RELEASES

JEFFERSON-BOUCICALT: *Rip van Winkle—Mountain Scene and Return Scene*; recited by Joseph Jefferson (1825-1905), actor. Re-recorded from a cylinder made about 1900. Release No. 5 of the Collectors Record Shop.

■ Although Jefferson was about seventy when these recordings were made, there is little sign of old age in them. The charm of the genial, shiftless Rip, with his Dutch accent and inflection, and his boyish nature, is quite captivating. This record will be particularly interesting to students of the American stage, for it gives a vivid idea of the art of one of its foremost actors. This does not mean that the appeal of the record is limited. Like the Scotti record, this one is a remarkable accomplishment in re-recording.

* * *

BELLINI: *Sonnambula — Vi Ravviso* and VERDI: *Aida — Sortita d'Amonasro*; sung by Antonio Scotti, baritone. Re-recorded from a cylinder made about 1905. Release No. 4 of the Collectors Record Shop.

■ With this record the Collectors Record Shop continues its publication of re-recorded items of great interest. The record is gratifyingly low in noise, and the voice of the singer is very clear, as are also the rhythmic vitality and the musical shading that were characteristic of Scotti. While the acoustic limitations of these old recordings were great, as is very well known, we must not forget that the records did fix much that is significant. Fine phrasing and good musical accent, open tone and firm skill, when present, were preserved for our admiration. They are all here, and we can recommend this record.

* * *

MEYERBEER: *Hugonots: Qui Sotto il Ciel*; Song: *Tu non mi vuoi più bene*; sung by Caruso, tenor. Release No. 6 of the Collectors Record Shop, 825 Seventh Avenue, New York.

VERDI: *Ernani: Ernani Involami*; and GOUNOD: *Faust: Re di Thule*; sung by Celestina Boninsegna, soprano. Release No. 7 of the Collectors Record Shop. Each record, price \$2.00.

■ In release No. 6, the Collectors Record Shop gives us one of the earliest easily obtainable recordings of Enrico Caruso, for it presents re-recordings of two cylinders made by the famous tenor about 1897-1899. At least,

so the label reads. Julian Morton Moses has been kind enough to tell me that in his opinion the cylinders date from about 1901, as the original series included also a selection from *Tosca*, which was first performed in 1900. Be that as it may, the record under consideration is very interesting. When I first heard this and the companion record, I confess that I was disappointed in them, my imagination having been keenly roused by the mere announcement. However, playing them on a better machine, with the treble turned down and the bass boosted, they turned out to be very good. Caruso was always a singer who became possessed by his music, so that there is an exciting spark of communication in every one of his performances. Here we have in addition the interest lent by observing an early stage of the magnificent voice we know so well. It was apparently brighter then, with something innocently boyish about it, but withal rock-firm and instantly responsive to the singer's conception. Firm, even to the high B-flat, which comes out brilliant and masculine, in curious contrast to the falsetto high B-flat in the *Pearl Fishers* aria dating from 1903. (Opera Disc No. 76062. This record can be easily bought in New York City. It must be played slowly enough to make the first note sung sound D.) I used to believe that this record showed Caruso still unable to put the full sound into the high note, but now I see that he was aiming for a soft expression which did not come off, just as in the later *Queen of Sheba* recording (1910, Victor No. 520 B), the last note, high D-flat, turned out to be an expressionless falsetto, although in point of development it is much more "in line" than the falsetto note in the *Pearl Fishers* aria. I was once told by some one who knew Caruso well, that when he heard this *Queen of Sheba* recording he was furious, and wanted to have it recalled, but it must have been too late.

Celestina Boninsegna was a singer with a luscious, supple soprano voice of immense range and power. In her records the high notes are clear and strong, and never shrill. The low notes are in a frank lower register, with a break that many listeners dislike heartily. I don't dislike it, for I would rather have the live clearness of these notes than the wooly, undeveloped low notes of most sopranos—that is, if I can't have a complete, even openness from top to bottom, as with Destinn or Melba. Boninsegna sings "straight," using musical means for her expression rather than calculated shading, and she can do so because she has at her command an instrument that gives

out directly whatever she wants. The *Ernani* aria is opulently sung, and so is the *Faust*, except that there is little projection of the tender, innocent ardor that marks the character Margueite.

—Arthur Waldeck

EDITORIAL NOTES

■ The past month removed two notable musicians from the contemporary scene—Karl Muck and Arnold Dolmetsch. Both contributed much to music in their time, and Dolmetsch, although in his eighties, was active in the cause of old music until his death.

Muck is best remembered by the writer for awakening in him an interest in the symphonic music of Brahms. Youth is impressionable, and first experiences can be lasting ones. In our early 'teens we went to hear a prominent New York conductor play Brahms' *First and Second Symphonies*. The performances were anything but inspired, and the pedestrian pacing and lack of vitality in them left us with the impression that Brahms was a completely uninspired composer. Then a friend took us, much against our will, to hear the Brahms *First* played by Muck and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. We were electrified; the music had meaning. And so we came to know and admire Muck and his superb musicianship. His performances of Wagner were magnificent and we seldom missed a concert in which he was playing a work by Wagner thereafter.

Muck made a series of Wagner recordings in 1930 which are still among the best despite their age. Victor set M-37 has as fine a performance of the *Prelude to Die Meistersinger* as we have on records; and contained therein are also excellent performances of the *Prelude to Parsifal*, the *Rhine Journey* and *Siegfried's Death* from *Götterdämmerung*. Probably these discs will be the prized possession of the older phonophile rather than the newer generation of record buyers, for their recording does not have the tonal realism or clarity that we have come to know in the past five years. Yet one recording which Muck made may well be in the collection of all phonophiles: we refer to Victor set M-67, the third act of *Parsifal*. Muck's recording of the *Siegfried Idyll* was good in his day, but has definitely been replaced by better recorded ones in recent years. Our preference favors Bruno Walter.

Arnold Dolmetsch was famous for his making and playing of almost every instrument of the 15th to 18th centuries. For many years he worked for the cause of old music and its performance on the old instruments. He maintained a workshop at Haslemere, Surrey (England), where he held annual festivals of music of bygone times. The story of Dolmetsch and his work was published in our September, 1938 issue (copies of which are still obtainable). Dolmetsch has made quite a number of recordings which are highly valued by his pupils and students of old music.

The multitudinous aspects of music represent problems to reviewers. We are endeavoring to review all worthwhile recordings issued monthly. Many recordings of lighter classics and popular excerpts do not require extended reviewing, but since readers may be interested to know the quality of the performance and recording of these, we have deemed it advisable to extend further the size and scope of our review section. Henceforth we shall endeavor to list as many of these recordings as possible under the heading of *Other Recordings*, and also to rate them as to performance and recording quality. Any suggestions by readers along these lines would be welcomed.

A questionnaire has been mailed to all readers of the magazine. As answers to this questionnaire will enable us to serve the readers' interests better at all times, we ask each recipient to fill it out, sign it, and return it to us at his earliest possible convenience.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor:

With reference to a report appearing in *Overtures* (January issue) to the effect that Victor is contemplating the recording of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, it may interest you to know that Victor recorded this mass in its entirety on December 2nd and 3rd, 1938. As the lapse of time between the recording of a work of this magnitude and the issuance of the recording to the public is about one year (this was the case with the *St. Matthew Passion* recording performed by the same organizations) it is possible to look forward to its release in the near future.

I found the letter written by Mr. G. Donald Harrison of great interest, as Victor's record-

ings of the Baroque organ in the Germanic Museum have received unfavorable criticism which in my humble opinion is not fully justified.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur Koehler New York, N. Y.

* * *

To the Editor,

Your mention of Carmen Melis (not Melius) brought a nostalgic tear to my eye. I had a violent case on her in 1910 (musically and otherwise). She was a radiant Tosca.

Now that Bartlett and Robertson (not Robinson) are active again in the studio, could you not use your influence to get recordings of *The Poisoned Fountain* and *Moy Mell* of Arnold Bax which they play so well?

The second Schumann *Romance* is not from the *Albumblatt* but, like its companion pieces, was written for oboe and piano. These pieces are sometimes played as violin pieces, and as such Kreisler recorded the second on the odd side of the Brahms Concerto (old set).

Sincerely yours,

H. S. G.

New York, N. Y., March 9, 1940

* * *

To the Editor,

We have formed a phonograph society, known as *The Society of Passive Listeners*, here in Park Ridge, Illinois. We are happy to report that our initial concert on March 8th came off most successfully. The program of the evening included the Weingartner performance of the Beethoven *Fifth*, the Boyd Neel version of the Handel *Concerto Grosso No. 3*, Stokowski's performance of Sibelius' *The Swan of Tuonela*, and Beecham's of *Festivo*.

Any readers interested in joining the group should communicate with the writer.

Cordially yours,

Raeburn Flerlage
2 North Delphia Ave., Park Ridge, Illinois.

SWING MUSIC NOTES

ENZO ARCHETTI

■ Spring is here and the changes have begun. By far the most exciting is that which took place in Tommy Dorsey's orchestra. Lately it had begun to slip. Each new record sounded practically the same as the one previously is-

sued. In spite of Tommy's own good blowing, the band was in a rut and was plainly on the down-slide. It needed new blood and Tommy accomplished it by overhauling practically the entire band. At least four men have been replaced, one released completely, and most important of all Bunny Berigan returns to the band as lead trumpet. These changes augur well for the band. It looks as if it will return to the good old *Marie*—*Song of India*—*Black Eyes* days.

This change is closely tied up with another equally important: Bunny Berigan has scrapped his band and has gone back to first chair work. Since 1937 when Bunny first succumbed to the urge that overtakes all musicians and makes them want to front their own bands, going was tough. In addition to more than his share of managerial troubles, Bunny was handicapped by a band that lacked men of his own calibre. That weakness never was remedied. And, in all friendliness, we may add another criticism: Bunny lacks the necessary showmanship to front a band. Bunny is essentially an artist who works at his best when he is free to concentrate on his music. Clowning, M. C.'ing, and prima donna exhibitionism are not his forte. It is the opinion of this writer that Bunny's place is in the band, not in front of it; that, though Tommy Dorsey's band may not be the ideal place for him, no mere name of a band leader can obscure him once he hits his stride.

Other important changes this month: the addition of Ben Webster to Duke Ellington's band, increasing its already splendid sax team to five; departure of Benny Morton from Count Basie's fold to join Joe Sullivan at the Café Society; Vic Dickinson replaces Benny in the Basie group; Bob Peck replaces Eddie Wade on trumpet in Bob Crosby's band; Ernie Caceres, formerly of Bobby Hackett's and Jack Teagarden's now with Glenn Miller's.

In spite of the war fever in Europe jazz goes on there just the same. The Jazz Club de Belgique continues to record and sponsor special discs. The newest to date are: *Gotta Date in Louisiana* and *Sugar Foot Strut* (L65642); *Hail! Mr. Swing* and *Mathusalem* (L65643)—the first three by Robert De Kers Band and the last by Gus DeLoof's. Also *Get That Swing* (L65641) and *Who's Wrong* and *Beyond the Blues* (L65640)—the first two solos by John Ouwere and the last by the Jack Webster orchestra. Incidentally, all the records of the Jazz Club have been available since the first release through only one importer in the U. S.—the International Re-

cords Agency of Richmond Hill, Long Island.

Artie Shaw, who said he was through with bands and jazz, is back in again—with both feet. But this time his orchestra is radically different: eight violins, three violas, two cellos, four saxes, six brass, four rhythm, an oboe, flute, bass clarinet, and French horn—31 pieces! It sounds like another André Kostelanetz combination. Arrangements will be by Artie himself and William Grant Still. It must be admitted that both have a flair for orchestral color and the results should be interesting if not jazz. Incidentally, Artie Shaw will record for the 75c Victor label while Larry Clinton, who has been a 75-center up to now, is being transferred to Bluebird.

The latest records received for review again lean heavily on the boogie-woogie side.

South side Shuffle; and *Ross Tavern Boogie*; piano solos by Art Hodes. Solo Art 12007, price \$1.00.

The first is a medium tempo blues on a rather trite theme which serves to show off a pianist with a typical but not prodigious technique. The variations are, on the whole, rather dull but the left hand work is sometimes quite outstanding. The recording is not too good for today. The piano tone is often blurry.

Jimmy's Stuff; and *The Fives*; piano solos by Jimmy Yancey. Solo Art 12008, price \$1.00.

Both original Yancey works, the second also known as *Five O'Clock Blues* which is credited to be the original boogie-woogie.

From the first note, one sits up and takes notice. Here is a different spirit, a different technique. The first is a medium-slow blues. The theme is not outstanding but the treatment is, particularly in the left hand.

Fives is boogie in the tempo we are usually accustomed to hearing but the treatment is very much out of the ordinary. The right hand variations really own a thrill. There is nothing at all monotonous in this boogie, which is more than can be said about most publicized boogie woogie pieces and players. Jimmy has the stuff and the ideas. The *Fives* made me go back immediately to my copy of *Jazzmen* to read the chapter *Boogie Woogie* by William Russell. There is no exaggeration there in the pages devoted to Yancey.

This record is much better recorded than the Hodes. The bass is not over-prominent. The only adverse criticism is that the ending of *Fives* is too abrupt and rather senseless.

Kansas City Farewell; and *Barrelhouse Breakdown*; Pete Johnson's Blue Trio. Blue Note No. 10, price \$1.50.

Vine Street Bustle; and *Some Day Blues*; Pete Johnson's Blues Trio. Blue Note No. 11, price \$1.50.

You Don't Know My Mind; and *Holler Stomp*; piano solos by Pete Johnson. Blue Note No. 12, price \$1.50.

(Personnel of the Trio is: Pete Johnson, piano, Ulysses Livingston, guitar; and Abe Bolar, bass.)

Blue Note will be the despair of reviewers yet! There is nothing a critic enjoys better than finding a fault to write about. But what fault can we find with a single Blue Note issued so far? True, they have not all been of equal quality. There were spots here and there that were not entirely satisfactory. But on the whole, there is sincerity of purpose perceptible in each of the discs issued so far.

The outstanding side in this group is *Some Day Blues*. First of all it is built around an excellent slow blues theme, and it is played by all with equal fervor. It is one of those themes that could go on and on through endless variations without tiring either the players or the listeners. In fact, it ends rather abruptly as if everyone concerned were so engrossed with the music that mechanical limitations were forgotten. The recording is excellent.

Honors are equally divided between Johnson and Livingston, with Bolar lending excellent support.

Second honors go to *You Don't Know My Mind* which is conceived in much the same mood as *Some Day Blues* but for a solo instrument. But in spite of its aural and emotional appeal, it is thematically and technically inferior.

Kansas City Farewell is also a slow blues on a good theme but its effect is lost in poorly balanced recording. The piano is too prominent; the guitar is too weakly recorded; and the bass is so badly out of focus that it is hardly more than a blurred boom throughout the disc.

The other three numbers are boogie woogies which are distinguished chiefly by the virtuosity of Pete Johnson, who is a past master with such music. Plenty of vim, vigor, and vitality but not much feeling.

Incidentally, all three discs were made at the same session. Pete Johnson chose his companions, one of whom, Abe Bolar, once played with him years ago in Kansas City honky tonks. Livingston was chosen because of the impression he had made at a jam session at Café Society when Johnson was playing there. All the numbers were unprepared and perfectly spontaneous.

gins shortly after the opening of side three, is most forceful and original. It owns a scherzo-like quality, and is bold and rhythmically barbaric. The finale brings restatements of the material used in the tragic and lyric sections with development of the rhythmic motive from the climax of section four. This last is very impressive, with a pedal point in the tympani maintaining a set tonality throughout. The work ends almost abruptly; one has the feeling of an athlete accumulating power and then suddenly when the goal is reached, gasping and falling across it.

Toscanini recently paid Harris the compliment of including this symphony in his March 16th broadcast concert, so many of our readers may have heard it. Koussevitzky, however, was the first to introduce it to the American public. He has long been a staunch admirer and exponent of the composer (he has already recorded Harris' *Symphony* 1933), and it is but just and fitting that he should have recorded this work. There may be some who will feel that Toscanini did it greater justice in his recent performance, but we believe this impression will be created by the fact that the performance was heard as a whole without the necessary breaks of the recording. To our way of thinking Koussevitzky plays the first theme more searchingly than Toscanini did. And since the work itself expands out of this first theme, its spacious breadth and expressive intensity are most important. Too, its tragic implication is better sustained. On the other hand, the symphony, as a whole, would seem to come off less successfully on records than it does in the concert hall.

The recording ranks with the best of recent sets by the Boston Symphony.

* * *

MOZART: *Symphony in D major (Haffner)*, K. 385; played by the London Philharmonic Orch., direction of Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia set M-399, three discs (five sides) price \$4.50.

■ This symphony is probably as familiar to phonophiles as any of Mozart because of the recording that Toscanini made of it a decade ago. That recording has remained among the most cherishable Mozart items on records these many years, but now that Beecham has made the work under more favorable circumstances the Toscanini recording will undoubtedly find itself displaced in many homes. Both performances are excellent ones. Although it cannot be said that the dramatic approach of the two conductors is so divergent as to fore-

stall comparison, it seems to me that comparison is unessential here. The age of the Toscanini recording definitely places the balance in favor of Beecham's.

Mozart wrote this work in his twenty-sixth year in less than a fortnight for his good friends, the Haffner family of Salzburg. The first movement is unique among Mozart's symphonies in that it is based entirely on a single subject, which is announced with the opening bar without preliminary introduction. Melodically the theme would seem on examination an ineffectual one, but Mozart was no *wunderkind* for nothing—what he does with it in performance of polyphonic feats is amazing. The andante is songful with some delightful touches of embellishment. This movement reminds us that Mozart intended the work at first as a serenade with an introductory march and another minuet. The minuet is blessed with a particularly ingratiating trio; and the finale, like the first movement, presents fine evidence of Mozart's technical inspiration. It is a spirited and capering finale, for which Mozart used as his main subject a quotation from Osmin's aria of malicious triumph in *The Seraglio*, which he had completed shortly before the symphony.

Beecham is particularly successful in his performance of this work; there is an admirable flexibility of line and tonal warmth. At the same time that he makes us aware of the technical mastery of the score, he never lets us lose sight of its grace and charm. As our friend, W.R.A. in England, has said: "five sides of Mozartian vintage-music, recorded to perfection. I place them among the naps of the year."

* * *

PURCELL: *Suite from Dido and Aeneas* (scored for modern orchestra by Lucien Cailliet); played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction Eugene Ormandy. Victor set M-647, two discs, price \$4.50.

■ The emotional intensity and quality of Purcell's music are of a high order. His variety of style and ability to vivify characters as well as situations also mark his essential greatness. *Dido and Aeneas* is justly regarded as the finest English opera. Composed in 1689, it still holds the stage. As Prof. Dent has said: "It is a national classic, it is the oldest opera which holds the stage on its dramatic merits, not merely from its interest as a museum piece, and it is an opera which in spite of its venerable age can still command our emotions by the force and truth of its inspiration."

A complete recording of the opera was made by the Purcell Club in England several

years ago and issued on Decca records. The performance, under the direction of Huber J. Foss, with Clarence Raybould conducting, employs Purcell's original scoring of strings and harpsichord. It is an admirable performance, more so perhaps on the instrumental side than on the vocal, for the singers are by no means all endowed with first-rate voices. But both taste and musicianship are sufficiently evidenced to make this set an enjoyable one. True, the listener misses the picture of the stage, particularly since a ballet figures largely in the score. That, however, is one good reason for the enjoyment of an orchestral suite from the opera; the symphonic characteristics of much of the music gain rather than lose when separated from the singing.

Mr. Cailliet has drawn skillfully from Purcell's score and assembled an effective suite. The overture, a fine example of 17th-century orchestral writing, occupies the first record face; this is followed by three dance sections on the second. The third face contains the opening of the second act, the Prelude to Act 3 and the moving recitative to Dido's famous lament, *When I am Laid in Earth*. The fourth face is given to the beautiful air.

In arranging this music of a bygone era for modern orchestra, Mr. Cailliet has considerably altered its style and historical perspective. Its original character is inflated; perhaps some may feel it enriched, for it certainly is broadened and more vividly colored. One cannot help but admire the arranger's instrumental resourcefulness even though one feels that Purcell's music would have been

more impressive with less of it. Purcell's original is strikingly beautiful and moving, and its true charm lies in the simplicity of the orchestration. But when the work is adapted in such a way as the present, there is a juxtaposition of two styles: the melodies are of the 18th century, and the treatment is of the 20th.

We are reminded that Barbirolli recorded a Purcell suite not long ago (Victor set M-533) in which he skilfully arranged Dido's lament, giving the voice part to the English horn. The simplicity and dignity of Barbirolli's arrangement admirably sustained the moving quality of this grief-laden music. For all the beauty of tone in Cailliet's richer arrangement, the emotion he conveys remains less persuasive.

Ormandy plays this music *con amore*, but it is more Cailliet that he honors than Purcell. The recording is excellent.

* * *

WEBER: *Euryanthe Overture*; played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, direction Frederick Stock. Columbia disc 11179, price \$2.00.

■ Every time we hear Weber's *Euryanthe Overture* we are reminded of what Wagner owed to him. *Euryanthe* has never been a successful opera, despite the excellence of its music. Its libretto is a confusing one, and the story just does not come off well on the stage. The libretto was written by von Chezy, who also wrote the play *Rosamunde*, to which Schubert contributed incidental music. As

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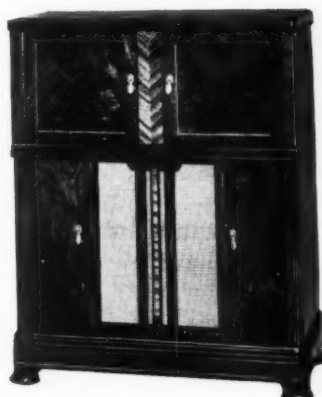
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stories both were deplorable and both let their composers down rather badly. The overture to *Euryanthe* is splendid and impressive, representing Weber's dramatic powers at their height. Like other overtures of his, it makes use of thematic material from the opera. The energetic and fiery opening quickens the pulses of the listener; time does not age music like this. After a half-dozen preliminary bars the heroic first theme is heard in the brass and woodwinds; it is based on an aria in the first act in which the hero affirms his belief in God and in the heroine's love. The cantabile section that follows is drawn from an aria in the second act expressive of elation. This gives way in turn to more heroic pomp, and then comes a *lento* section (at the end of the first record face) intended to convey a ghostly scene in the drama but which here emerges more as a mood of sorrowful beauty than ghostliness. The development section follows (beginning side two); it offers a brilliant treatment of the opening theme. The recapitulation makes good use of the "happiness" or cantabile theme material.

Frederick Stock gives a buoyant and intensified reading of this overture. No one who has heard him conduct music of the romantic period needs to be told that he is particularly successful with it. We recall his Schumann, and it prompts us to put in a bid for the conductor's performance of the *Rhenish Symphony*.

There is another admirable performance of the *Euryanthe Overture* by Boult and the B.B.C. Orchestra. Comparing the two we find that both have their attributes: that of Stock offering the more eloquent reading, that of Boult the more felicitous recording. As splendid as the reproduction is in the new Chicago disc, there is an echo in it that is disturbing in *fortissimo* passages. —P. H. R.

* * *

HANSON: *Symphony No. 2 (Romantic)*; played by the Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Howard Hanson. Victor set M-648, four discs, price \$8.00.

■ Written in 1930, the *Romantic Symphony* is what its name implies. If by romanticism we mean an emphasis on emotional subjectivity with less regard for form than for expression, this work by Hanson is decidedly romantic. It may be dissonant at times, but the dissonance is of the healthy kind that is a natural adjunct to the expressive moods of the music. This symphony was a forerunner of the neo-romanticism that is coming into fashion today; consciously or otherwise it was, I believe, a protest against the arid intellec-

tualism and bleak objectivity of most post-war music. There is more often than not a real warmth to the work; and while it may have defects, I have long admired its unblushing, forthright qualities, and its happy union of the twentieth-century spirit with a frankly emotional personal quality.

Thus, although one can find flaws in this symphony, and although one may probe and triumphantly unearth traces of Ravel, Vaughan Williams or Strauss, the fact remains that on the whole the symphony is sturdy, vigorous, and the real expression of an individuality. All three movements are splendidly and sonorously scored, with a liberal and especially effective use of horns. The score reveals that the composer has used a full orchestra virtually throughout the entire work, but a fine balance is preserved, and there is only a slight tendency toward the melodramatic. True, a certain amount of overstatement is noticeable; there is a free exchange of themes throughout all of the movements and some condensation might have been in order. The first movement especially seems to be slightly long for its material, and the horn figures verge slightly on the pompous. Again, the musical content of the second movement is somewhat too obvious and almost lapses into sentimentality. But these are faults common to most young composers (Dr. Hanson was 34 years old when he completed the work), and are eclipsed by the energy and strength of the whole.

It is good to note that the splendid series of American compositions that Victor is making with Hanson and the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra will be continued. The orchestra is an excellent one and has been well recorded. In the present set, Hanson of course gives us an authoritative version of his work.

—H. C. S.

* * *

GOLDMARK: *Sakuntala—Overture, Op. 13*; played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc 12610, price \$1.50.

■ When the late Lawrence Gilman wrote his *Stories of Symphonic Music* in 1907, this overture was heard more often than it is today. It is music typical of its period, the middle of the 19th century. It brought its composer, the Hungarian-born Karl Goldmark, fame throughout Europe, and was played in European concerts steadily from 1865 onward. Its first American performance came in 1877, and it seems to have found equal appeal with audiences here from that date. Gilman tells us that the music is conceived as a comment-

ary on Kalidassa's famous Indian drama, *Sakuntala*. It concerns the marriage of a great king to Sakuntala, the daughter of a nymph, who is brought up as the adopted daughter of a high priest; the king's repudiation of the wedding through a loss of memory by a magic spell; and the subsequent reunion of the love after the king carries out a warlike campaign against the evil forces.

The overture is simply and effectively written, the melodies are well devised and the whole thing is put together with skill. There is a prevalence of sentiment which unquestionably is intended as the love element. The composer has not striven to be graphic in his outline of the story.

The performance of this music is effectively managed, and the recording is good.

* * *

GRIEG: *Elegiac Melodies*—1. *Heart Wounds*, 2. *Last Spring*, *Op.* 34; played by London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Eugene Goossens. Victor disc 12611, price \$1.50.

■ Grieg arranged these pieces from his songs, *I'ären* (*Spring*) and *Veld Ronderne* (*The Wounded Heart*), *Op.* 33, Nos. 2 and 3. In scoring the songs for strings he wisely reversed their order, for the lovely melody of *Last Spring* is one that definitely suggests the fading out of a memory or scene.

One is always glad to welcome Eugene Goossens in a recording; there are a polish and a graciousness to his playing which are particularly satisfying, and these qualities are fully evidenced here. The reproduction is good, and the surfaces smooth—an essential requirement for music of this character

* * *

SIBELIUS: *Finlandia*, *Op.* 26; played by the Cleveland Orchestra, direction Artur Rodzinski. Columbia disc 11178, price \$2.00.

■ Rodzinski brings a challenging note to the powerful opening of this popular composition of the noted Finnish giant. The playing is full, surging and heroic. As a matter of fact throughout the entire work he stresses its epic implications. This is a stirring performance and a notable recording, but it does not necessarily displace the magnificent Beecham disc which Columbia has already given us. Beecham's reading of the dark-hued, brooding opening section is paced somewhat slower than Rodzinski's and is more poignantly expressive. He plays the music majestically rather than heroically. Both are remarkable readings, and our praise of one does not signify disparagement of the other. It is a matter of temperament, and to the listener what he prefers to have in this music. —P. G.

Chamber Music

BEETHOVEN: *Quartet No. 3 in D major, Op.* 18, No. 3; played by the Coolidge String Quartet. Victor set M-650, two discs, \$3.50.

■ The most attractive feature of this set is the price. It is almost half the price of the Budapest String Quartet set (Victor M-289). The Coolidge Quartet plays here with its customary polish and assurance, but there is none of the tonal richness or expressive warmth that are to be found in the performance of the Budapest Quartet. The sensitive listener will want the latter set, which incidentally as a recording is quite as satisfactory as the newer one. Of course, the difference in price will make it necessary to save a few more dollars to acquire the Budapest performance, but, in the long run, the listener will find the more comprehensive poetic sensibility of the Budapest's highly gratifying.

This quartet was the first in order of composition of the six in opus 18, although published as the third. It shows the influence of Haydn, but at the same time testifies to Beethoven's ability to reshape the style of a noted predecessor. As we have pointed out previously, the opening phase of the work with its interspersed solid chords and flowing lines is definitely Beethovenian in structure. The finale is said to be the composer's idea of a gigue, but its galloping jollity is reminiscent in style of many of Haydn's gay finales.

By playing the first movement slightly faster than the Budapest and by omitting repetition of the exposition, the Coolidges have been able to get it onto one side and a fraction. The slow movement occupies the balance of side two and part of side three. The scherzo is got onto the balance of side three by not repeating the main parts of the first section and of the *minore*. The last movement occupies side four and includes a repeat of the exposition—the only repeat which the Budapests do not observe in their performance. The recording is satisfactorily achieved.

* * *

HAYDN: *Quartet in D major, Op.* 76, No. 5; played by Roth Quartet (Messrs. Roth, Weinstock, Shaier, Edel). Columbia set M-400, three discs, price \$5.00.

■ The Roth Quartet was completely overhauled in recent months, and the only member surviving from the original group is its leader, Feri Roth. It may be that the new group has not been together long enough to develop a smooth ensemble and a unity of

purpose in their playing. Perhaps it will come in time, but it is sadly lacking here. One is reminded that the old ensemble had been together for a great many years; the quartet was originally formed in 1922. The playing of the new group here lacks conviction; even the leader seems uncertain of himself and is guilty of more tonal sliding than has been evidenced in any of his previous playing on records. The old set of the Lener String Quartet, made all of decade ago, offers much more than this new set, despite the latter's superior recording.

This quartet deserves better treatment than it receives here, for it is one of Haydn's best. It was a great favorite of the Flonzaleys in their time, and was undoubtedly a favorite of the Kneisel Quartet, for at Kneisel's funeral it was played by a group of his pupils. The first movement suggests the influence of Mozart, and the succeeding largo is unusually beautiful and expressive. The minuet owns an ingenious and charming trio with long lines for the cello, which one will have to turn to the Lener set to hear played with correct phrasing and tonal certainty. —P. H. R.

Keyboard

BACH: *The Little Organ Book, Vol. I: In dir ist Freude; Mit Fried' und Freud' fahr' ich dahin; Herr Gott, nun schleuss den Himmel auf; O Lamm Gottes unschuldig; Christe, du Lamm Gottes; Christus, der uns selig macht; Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund; O Mensch, bewein' dein Sünde gross; Wir danken dir, Herr Jesus Christ; Hilf Gott, dass mir's gelinge; Christ lag in Todesbanden; Jesus Christus, unser Heiland; Christ ist erstanden; Erstanden ist der heil'ge Christ; Erschienen ist der herrliche Tag; Heut' triumphiret Gottes Sohn;* played by E. Power Biggs on the organ of the Germanic Museum, Cambridge, Mass. Victor set M-652, price \$6.50.

■ The idea of issuing a complete recording of Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* is not only a splendidly high-minded one on the part of the Victor Company, but it is also an extremely venturesome undertaking. A few years ago it would hardly have been conceivable that such a thing would be attempted. With the far greater spirit of musical adventure characteristic of the record-buying public today, we can hope and pray that every such venture will be a tremendous success, for naturally the sales returns will be a factor in determining

future policy. Consequently, it is with hesitation that I offer any criticism of this set.

Perhaps nowhere in all his works do we come nearer to the heart and soul of Johann Sebastian Bach than in the *Chorale Preludes*. And if evidence were needed of his deeply religious nature, these little tone poems would be sufficient. Each of them is conceived and developed as truly "out of the words" as the greatest song of Hugo Wolf—in fact the surest way to an understanding of them is by familiarizing ourselves with the texts of the original chorales. The *Orgelbüchlein* as he planned it, we are told, was to have comprised 164 preludes upon 161 chorale melodies. Actually he completed only 46, but, according to Terry, the melodies he used are precisely those best suited to this kind of treatment. There are preludes among them appropriate to each season of the Christian year, arranged, as is usual in hymn-books, in their chronological order. It is Victor's plan to follow this order, although in the recording the calendar year is to be followed rather than that of the church. Thus in this first set we begin the New Year rather than with Advent, and cover the feasts of Purification, Passiontide, Easter and Ascension.

Whether or not the organ is the "king" or the "queen" of musical instruments, I don't believe there can be much doubt that it is one of the most difficult to master. It is easy enough for those of us who have not mastered it to pass judgment upon an organist, and in a certain sense such judgment is justified—for if the organ cannot meet standard musical requirements, so much the worse for the organ. But there are problems of acoustics which no layman will ever thoroughly understand, and to which very few organists and organ builders seem to give enough attention. These problems are less staggering in a baroque organ or a reproduction such as that used by Mr. Biggs, because in the days of Bach and his forerunners an organ was designed for clarity. But within the empty marble halls of a museum there is still the problem with which to cope, and so I suppose for recording purposes the organist is forced even to depart to some extent from the registrations and tempi which he finds appropriate when the hall is full of echo-absorbing people. Thus he has the dual problem of absolute acoustics in organ playing, and the special acoustics of organ recording. Mr. Biggs and Victor have not yet fully succeeded in overcoming these difficulties.

It is impossible to overpraise Bach's contribution to this set. The *Chorale Preludes*

have been rather slow in coming from the studios, and so every new collection of them is a real event. With the Columbia Schweitzer set (M-310), which is indispensable despite uneven playing, the Musicraft collection played by Weinrich (Set 22) and the four *Preludes* included in Mr. Biggs' Victor M-616, the field is now beginning to be covered, and we can only pray that the public appetite for this music will come with the eating. If the organist in this set seems less convinced than I am that he is playing some of the greatest of the world's music, still the music is here, and with the reservations presented above, we can enjoy it.

—P. M.

BIZET-CHASINS: *Carmen Fantasy*; played by Clifford Herzer and Jascha Zayde, duopianists. Royale disc 585, price \$1.00.

■ Herzer and Zayde are fast achieving a fine reputation for their two-piano broadcasts over Station WQXR in New York City. That reputation is fully justified, and the present disc affords a vivid testimonial for the reason for their popularity. The performance here can match that of any other two-piano combination; and, since the recording and balance are excellent, this release is heartily recommended. For some reason, no credit is given

on the labels to the arranger, Abram Chasins. Chasins has whipped up a pleasant froth of themes from *Carmen*, and both pianists negotiate some very tricky writing with great dexterity and cleanness. Music like this fantasy does not demand an excess of "interpretation", and it is to the credit of the artists that they refrain from undue sentimentality.

—H. C. S.

BUXTEHUDE: *Toccata in F major; Chorale Preludes: Lobt Gott, ihr Christen, allzugleich; Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ; Magnificat primi toni; Chorale fantasy on Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern; Prelude and Fugue in E minor*; played by Carl Weinrich on the "Praetorius" organ at the Westminster Choir College, Princeton, N. J. Musicraft set 40, four discs, price \$6.50.

■ If Musicraft had done no other valuable work in uncovering masterpieces of the past, they would deserve the thanks of all serious musicians for the missionary work they have done for Bach's great predecessor, Dietrich Buxtehude. This distinguished gentleman has long figured in the history books as perhaps the strongest single influence on his younger contemporary, but until recently there been

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little inclination to investigate this "strong influence" as practical music in itself—for such investigations have so often proved esthetically unprofitable.

In the case of Buxtehude this is certainly not true. As we listen to these new Weinrich recordings we can understand where certain of Bach's inclinations and thought processes came from, but—quite obviously—this is not the music of Bach. We can feel a different personality behind it—however vaguely, for most of us know pathetically little about Buxtehude the man. Perhaps in the long run he is a less imposingly human figure; perhaps, which is quite natural, he did not have the irresistible strength and drive, the sheer virtuosity which makes such of Bach's music as the *Toccatas and Fugues* for organ the monuments they are. Perhaps, too, in his treatment of the chorale prelude, he did not have the almost superhuman penetration which enabled Bach to translate into music absolute and sublime the religious significance of these magnificent hymns. Perhaps it is rather these things than technical advances that separate Buxtehude from Bach—actually temperamental and intellectual differences. "To relegate Buxtehude to the rank of a mere 'fore-runner'," says Herman Adler in his excellent book of notes on these records, "would be as unjust to him and unfair to ourselves as it would be to assign that role to Haydn in relation to Mozart."

There is considerable variety within the confines of this four-disc album set. The *F major Toccata*—complete with fugue—is a joyous little work, by no means so spectacular as the toccatas of Bach, but possessing a freshness and charm of its own. The *Chorale Preludes*, the *Magnificat* and the *Chorale Fantasy*, as noted above, make no attempt to strike so deep in their subjects as do similar works of Bach, but for this very reason they come to our ears today with all the attractiveness of novelty. The *Prelude and Fugue in E minor* is the most ambitious work in the set, and here, too, we see the most definite foreshadowing of Buxtehude's great follower.

It seems hardly necessary at this late date to remark that Carl Weinrich fully understands and conveys the spirit of this great music. If anything, we find in his treatment of Buxtehude a greater refinement and delicacy of registration than had been encountered in his Bach playing. The recording maintains the high standards set by the Musi-craft albums of the Bach *Toccatas and Fugues*, which standards in organ reproduction have merely been approached by any other com-

pany. For the material it contains, for the splendidly convincing manner in which that material is presented, and for the excellence of its reproduction, this is likely to remain one of the outstanding releases of the year.

P. M.

* * *

MILHAUD: *Scaramouche* (*Suite for Two Pianos*); played by Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson. Col. disc 69835, price \$1.50.

■ Milhaud, that very clever Frenchman, made a trip to Brazil some years ago, and *Scaramouche* was one of the results. Bartlett and Robertson have had this in their repertoire for some time, and invariably bring down the house when they present it in concert. For it is highly enjoyable, although far from being great music, and its rhythmic verve is quite exciting.

The present suite comprises three sections: *l'if*, *Modéré*, and *Brazileira*. The first and last are markedly jazzy; the middle section is quiet and flowing, French in spirit, and does not seem to belong to the suite. Most of the attraction is in the Brazilian flavor of the work. Milhaud's Brazil is not the Brazil of Villa-Lobos; it is sophisticated, polished and urbane. *Scaramouche* could scarcely be called distinguished music; it is the speed and plastic rhythm that save the work from complete banality. Bartlett and Robertson, of course, perform in a manner that brings out the most attractive features of the music. There might be a trifle more abandon in the opening section—there they are perhaps too meticulous—but in the last section they really go to town.

In our review of the Bartlett-Robertson release last month, we called the gentleman in question Robinson. As admirers of the gifted team for many years, we still do not know how it happened. We apologize for the slip, and promise that it will not happen again.

—H. C. S.

* * *

MOUSSORGSKY: *Pictures at an Exhibition*; played by Alfred Mirovitch, piano. Royale discs 1819, 1821, and 1851/3, price 75c each.

■ It has been the unhappy fate of the *Pictures* to have been immortalized in Ravel's transcription for orchestra. Moussorgsky wrote them for piano, but they are seldom heard in that form. Indeed, this set marks the first time that any of them have been recorded. There has been a great hue and cry about the music being unpianistic and not worthy a place in the pianists' repertoire. That is not altogether just; they may not fit the keyboard in a Chopinistic sense, but they are neverthe-

less highly effective. And while I confess a partiality for Ravel's stunning orchestration, I find the original piano version well worth repeated hearings.

Moussorgsky was a friend of the artist Hartmann, who died in 1873. The following year Vladimir Stasov arranged a memorial exhibition of his works; the composer attended and wrote these ten musical pictures after sketches he had seen there. For a full story of the relationship between the two men, I refer the reader to Alfred Frankenstein's article *Victor Hartmann and Modeste Musorgsky* in the July, 1939 issue of the *Musical Quarterly*.

Many of the sketches are preceded by a *Promenade*, which is a musical portrait of the composer walking about the exhibition. It is in a rhythm of five beats alternating with six, and "creates an awkward, waddy effect." As Frankenstein says, Moussorgsky was no sylph. The pictures, the titles of which are mostly self explanatory, are *The Ruined Castle, Tuileries—Dispute of the Children at Play, Bydlo* (A Polish Ox-Cart), *Ballet of the Chickens in Their Shells, Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle, Limoges—The Market Place, Catacombs—With the Dead in a Dead Language, The Hut of Baba Yaga, and The Great Gate of Kiev*.

A rehearing of the music confirms the impression that this is one of the most imaginative things ever to come from Moussorgsky's pen. There is not one sketch that does not catch the essence of the picture and many are exceedingly beautiful. And being by Moussorgsky, they are unmistakably Russian; even the caricatures are tinged with the Slavic melancholy. Not that the composer wears his heart on this sleeve—he seldom did; but always in evidence is the minor undertone that is the mark of the Slav. Even the triumphal and inspiring *Gates of Kiev* is broken up by a series of minor chords.

Unfortunately Mirovitch does not always do the work full justice. His playing is sometimes inaccurate, nor is there enough shading, with a resultant tendency toward tonal monotony. This is especially noticeable in *Kiev*, where choppy phrasing and monotony of dynamics somewhat negate the grandeur of the whole. Some of the selections are cut—the *Tuileries* and *Baba Yaga*—and suffer thereby. Furthermore, in the *Tuileries* and *Limoges*, he does not catch the bustle and excitement. In the latter, he adds an ending not indicated in my edition (Schott), nor does that edition show the bass trills that Mirovitch employs in the *Catacombs*.

The records do not run consecutively, and some shuffling will be necessary to play them in their proper order. It is worth the trouble, however. For the recording is adequate, the music is wonderful and unhackneyed, and the soloist manages to sustain a consistent, if not inspired level. Besides, this is the only recorded version for piano.

* * *

MOZART: *Variations on Come un'agnello*, K. 460; played by Alfred Mirovitch. Royale disc 584, price \$1.00.

ALBENIZ: *Malagueña*, Op. 71, No. 6 and *Seguidillas*, Op. 232, No. 5; played by Alfred Mirovitch, pianist. Royale 10-inch disc 1841, price 75c.

LISZT: *Die Lorelei*; played by Alfred Mirovitch. Royale 10-inch disc 1837, price 75c.

■ Since two of the above discs are first American recordings, and since the Albeniz selections were last recorded some time ago, these compositions played by Mirovitch are worth of attention. It cannot be said, however, that he triumphs pianistically: there is little stylistic differentiation in the interpretations of the three widely different composers, and the soloist's conception seems to be objective to the point of colorlessness.

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The Mozart variations were composed in 1784, and are based on a theme from Sarti's *Fra i due litiganti il terzo gode*. They are not Mozart at his best, and rank among his most conventional pieces. Mirovitch is somewhat heavy handed here. He does not impress as a Mozart player, and there is little grace and limpidity in his somewhat stolid performance. His Liszt is much more convincing; there he digs into the music and extracts some of the romantic essence.

Both of the Albeniz selections have been recorded before. I have not heard the Cortot versions, but that of Copland playing the *Malagueña* (No. 6 of *Souvenirs de voyage*; also known as *Rumores de la Caleta*) is preferable to the present release. Mirovitch catches little of the spirit. While he hits most of the notes, the rhythmic subtleties elude him, and the lack of color and pedal, especially noticeable in *Seguidillas*, removes all verve and sparkle.

The recording in all three records is good but the Mozart has noisy surfaces.

* * *

PIANO MUSIC OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (Including compositions by Debussy, Prokofieff, Copland, Respighi, Krenek, and Schönberg); played by Jesús María Sanromá. Victor set M-646, two 10-inch and two 12-inch discs, price \$7.00.

■ Because of the scope of this set, it has been decided to make it the subject of a special article, to appear in the next issue.

* * *

SCHUMANN: *Symphonic Etudes*, Op. 13, played by Edward Kilenyi, piano. Columbia set X-162, two discs, price \$3.50.

■ It was in 1834 that Schumann became engaged to Ernestine von Fricken. The affair did not last long; already the composer was becoming enamored of Clara Wieck. But it is to Schumann's relationship with Ernestine that we owe the *Etudes Symphoniques*, for her father supplied Schumann with the theme. It was not until 1836 that the variations emerged in their present form; the last variation probably was composed after the composer met Sterndale Bennett in Leipzig, November 1836. When the work was published in 1837, they not only were dedicated to the young English composer, but contained a musical reference to his country, for the opening phrase of the last variation was borrowed from the *Romance* in Marschner's *Ivanhoe* opera *The Templar and the Jewess*. The words from the opera are: "Rejoice, O England proud, rejoice!"

Much has been said about the influence of

Chopin in these etudes, but, while a possible relationship can be discovered in some, it is easy to exaggerate that influence. As a matter of fact it was not until late in 1835 when he first met the Pole, although he had corresponded with him for some time. At that date, the *Etudes Symphoniques* were probably near completion. Schumann was almost as great a pianistic innovator as Chopin, and in style and treatment this work shows much originality. The poetry and sheer beauty of some of the variations make them among the greatest things ever composed for the piano.

Kilenyi's playing is the most satisfactory I have heard from him. There still remains a certain lack of poise, dropped notes are in evidence, and there is often a tendency to rush headlong into a blurred mass of notes; but to overbalance these defects, there is a healthy vigor that carries him over most of the awkward moments. Nearly all of the variations emerge with a youthful romanticism; it is in the more lyrical ones that Kilenyi has the most trouble. In the third etude, for example, there could be more color; the fleet-ing arpeggio figures in the right hand are somewhat steely. And in fast sections the pianist sometimes drops the end of a phrase, giving a rather disjointed feeling. The best playing occurs in the finale, which is done with an abundance of spirit.

The two previous recordings of the *Symphonic Etudes* are old—Cortot's was released in 1932, and the Grainger is even older—and this set will easily supersede them. I do not think that it is the definitive version, but it is worth having. The recording is excellent, although the first and last sides have a little more surface noise that is usually heard on Columbia records.

* * *

ROSSI: *Toccata in G major*, transcribed by Alceo Toni; and PASQUINI: *Toccata sul canto del cuculo*; revised by Felice Boghen; played by Nino Rossi, piano. Victor disc 15893, price \$2.00.

■ These unfamiliar works are the products of two Italian composers of the 17th century. Michaelangelo Rossi (c. 1620-c. 1660) was a pupil of Frescobaldi, and, like Pasquini and all of their contemporaries, wrote innumerable organ works, most of which are deservedly forgotten. Pasquini (1637-1710) is remembered almost solely by the present *Toccata on the song of the Cuckoo*, a primitive excursion into program music. I have not seen the originals and thus cannot state whether the transcriptions are faithful. It seems of little importance, however, for both selections are

extremely conventional and uninteresting. Rossi plays them with a devotion worthy of a better cause. The recording is full and lifelike.

SCRIABINE: *Sonata No. 5, Op. 53* (three sides); and *Prelude in F sharp major, Op. 37, No. 2; Etude in F sharp minor, Op. 8, No. 2* (1 side); played by Katherine Ruth Heyman. Friends of Recorded Music discs 26 and 27, price \$1.50 each.

■ Miss Heyman, director of the Scriabine Circle, has long specialized in the performance of Scriabine's music, and her all-Scriabine programs were features of the concert hall for many years. Her interpretations were handed down to her by the composer himself, and have the stamp of authenticity. Her unconventional use of the pedals to convey atmospheric effects is a quality peculiar to herself; it was a device used by Scriabine and taught by him to her.

A discussion of the music played here by Miss Heyman will be found toward the end of Mr. Rosenfeld's article, which is included elsewhere in this issue.

The Friends of Recorded Music is pleased to present this recording at this time to the public as a contributory gesture toward the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the composer's death.

—P. G.

Instrumental

DEBUSSY: *Children's Corner* (transcribed by Carlos Salzedo); played by Georges Barrère (flute), Carlos Salzedo (harp), and Horace Britt (cello). Victor set M-639, three 10-inch discs, price \$5.00.

■ The present trio, made up of three musicians eminent in their respective fields, is well known in the concert hall. Since the repertoire for flute, harp and cello is extremely limited, the group plays quite a number of transcriptions made by the able and talented Salzedo. As ingenious as these present arrangements are, it is doubtful whether those familiar with these pieces on the piano will find their value enhanced. The charming and piquant impressionistic atmosphere of these little sketches, which Debussy wrote for the particular edification of his young daughter, is entirely altered. The interesting feature of the album is the skill with which Mr. Salzedo has arranged them. The playing is up to the high standard set by the members of this famous ensemble, but one could wish that they had turned their attention to something more fruitful. The recording is admirably contrived.

—P. G.

HALVORSEN-HANDEL: *Passacaglia*; played by Eddy Brown (violin) and Milton Katims (viola). Royale 10-inch disc 1840, 75c.

■ This work is an arrangement for violin and viola of the *Passacaglia* from Handel's *Harpsichord Suite No. 7* (Landowska has played it in the original form in Victor set M-593). Halvorsen has made a tremendously interesting and stimulating composition for two stringed instruments, and not even a purist would object to the liberties he has taken, so refreshing and true to the Handel style is the result.

All of a half dozen years or more ago, Columbia issued a recording of this work by the distinguished English musicians, Albert Sammons and Lionel Tertis. The performance in that record still remains the criterion; for neither Mr. Brown nor his assisting artist here achieve the perfection of detail or tonal nuance that is to be found in the former recording. They play the work too hurriedly with the result that the viola part is often blurred and unsuccessfully projected. Taken at such a pace the music loses some of its dignity.

From the reproductive standpoint there is very little to choose between the two recordings.

—P. H. R.

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Other Scriabine Recordings already issued include:

Fourth Sonata, Opus 30 — disc 20

Flammes Sombres, Opus 73; with Klavierstück, Opus 11, No. 2 (Schoenberg) — disc 9

PLAYED BY

Katherine Ruth Heyman

LUENING: *Suite for Soprano and Flute*; performed by Ethel Luening (soprano) and Otto Luening (flute). New Music Quarterly Recording disc 1513. Price \$2.00.

■ Like so many of the New Music Quarterly Recordings this one brings us music of experiment. Luening is a good flutist and his wife is a musicianly singer. The suite was doubtless written for their individual talents, and will probably serve on more than one occasion successfully to exploit those talents.

The work is divided into four parts: 1. *Nightpiece* (soprano alone); 2. *Dawnpiece* (flute alone); 3. *Morning Song* and 4. *Evening Song* (both for soprano and flute). Nothing especially exciting takes place at any of these specifically designate times of day, except that a soprano and flutist have made a little not unpleasant music.

The recording has been completely done by Musicraft.

* * *

RAVEL-GARBAN: *Kaddisch* (Prayer for the Dead); played by Yehudi Menuhin, accompanied by Marcel Gazelle; and BLOCH: *Abodah* (God's Worship); Menuhin, accompanied by Hendrik Endt. Victor disc 15887, price \$2.00.

■ Hebrew music is both traditional and improvisatory. It is traditional in the sense that it is based on very old rituals and modal patterns; it is improvisatory because during the ceremony the worshippers extemporize on the modal patterns. The reading of the scriptures by cantillation was an outstanding feature of the Synagogue, and the leading of this cantillation was the duty of the Chazzan, or cantor. Scholes states that in Eastern Europe the singing of the cantors "supplied the place of concert and opera. The faculty of melodic improvisation often became wonderfully developed, as did the art of florid coloratura."

Ravel wrote three *Chants hébraïques* for soprano, with a Yiddish instead of a Hebrew text. The present arrangement utilizes the first of these. *Kaddisch* is one of the most solemn of the Hebrew ceremonies, and Ravel has captured the mystical essence of the Hebraic identification with the Godhead. He makes use of the underlying exotic flavor of the chant, and the whole is unmistakably genuine.

The Bloch *Abodah* is, I believe, a first recording. Like the Ravel it is subdued, and saturated with the ritual of the Synagogue; both are fantasias on a text, much as a cantor would treat them.

Menuhin plays with fervor in both selec-

tions. The opening phrases of the Ravel are somewhat lush and saccharine, but not overly so; and perhaps it is in keeping with the nature of the music. As in most Menuhin discs, the recording fully captures the warmth of his tone.

* * *

SCHUMANN: *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 73; played by Gregor Piatigorsky, cello, accompanied by Ivor Newton. Columbia disc 69836-D, price \$1.50.

■ Like the Schumann *Romances* for oboe, issued by Columbia last month, these *Fantasiestücke* were written with several instruments in mind. Schumann designated them for violin, cello, or clarinet; it is in the cello version that they are most frequently heard. The work is in three sections, opening with a tender and melancholy theme and proceeding to two faster movements. There is a marked affinity with the *Romances*; in both are found the arch-romanticism of Schumann's youth tempered by the sadness of his later years. Exceedingly beautiful is the opening movement, and Piatigorsky's understanding of its expressive phrases makes the disc a memorable addition to the cello repertoire. This record marks Piatigorsky's debut on Columbia labels, and a welcome debut it is. We fondly remember his old Victor set of the Schumann concerto; perhaps now Columbia will issue a modern re-recording.

H. C. S.

Voice

AMERICAN FOLKSONGS: *John Henry*; and *Jack o' Diamonds* (arr. by J. J. Niles); sung by John Jacob Niles, tenor, with dulcimer accompaniment. Victor 10-inch disc, No. 2051, price \$1.50.

■ Here is a pendant to the recent John Jacob Niles album of *Early American Ballads*. The new selections are more easily recognizable as American, perhaps because they are not so early as the songs in the set. *John Henry*, of course, is one of the most American figures in our folklore. The songs about him are legion, and only a few weeks ago he appeared on Broadway in the person of Paul Robeson. It may be that this release was timed with that production, which, unfortunately, was not a success. In any case, here is one version of the story of the hero, done in Mr. Niles' best manner, to his own dulcimer accompaniment. And with it here is another American work song, the words of which will be in part familiar to everybody, thanks to their incorpora-

tion into the more familiar *Water Boy*. The disc will give great pleasure to those who enjoyed the Niles album, for only a certain fuzziness, which I was unable to tune completely out of the reproduced voice, remains to be criticized.

* * *

BULL (arr. Gilbert): *The Herd Girl's Sunday* (in English); SODERBERG (arr. Lundholm): *Fogelns Visa* (in Swedish); sung by The Jenny Lind Chorus of the Augustana Choir, Henry Veld, conductor. Ten-inch Victor disc, No. 2052, price \$1.50.

■ The ladies' section of the Augustana Choir is less skillful at putting their words over than the men's but otherwise the performances here reach about the same standards as that on the month's other Augustana recording. *The Herd-Girl's Sunday*, the melody by which the greatest Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull, is best remembered nowadays, is presented rather more haltingly than is good for its shape, but this is a fault of conception rather than of execution. The scarcely less familiar companion piece is sung more simply, and is consequently more effective. One could hardly find fault with the mechanical aspects of the disc.

* * *

DE FONTENAILLES: *A l'aimé*; TOSTI: *Si tu le voulais*; sung by Rosa Ponselle, soprano, with piano accompaniment by Romano Romani. Ten-inch Victor disc, No. 2053, \$1.50.

■ It is a pleasure to say that, after an absence far too long, Rosa Ponselle returns to the Victor studios not, perhaps, in her old form, but still the possessor of one of the loveliest and most impressive voices of our time, and with an artistic approach to non-operatic material which seems to be something new with her. It may be, if we are to judge by this disc, that she is destined to become one of the world's really distinguished song-singers. To be sure, the two songs on this record are not creations of towering importance, but they bring us music of a kind that will always be welcome so long as there are singers capable of bringing out the best that is in it. The Tosti song is one of many similar melodies left us by this composer—the type of Victorian salon ballad created to supply the needs of a generation of great vocalists. Its companion, with its opening monotone, and its later portamento rise of a sixth, recalls at once the *Dream* from Massenet's *Manon*, *Che gelida manina* from Puccini's *La Bohème*, and the *Ave Maria* from Verdi's *Otello*. H. de

Fontenailles, an amateur composer of some talent, will best be recalled as the writer of the once tremendously popular *Obstination*. *A l'aimé* gives the singer a chance to show a truly magnificent low A flat at the end of the first stanza, and a beautifully full high G in the middle of each. More than a little of the velvet is in evidence here. I understand that this disc is the forerunner of an album of songs by Miss Ponselle. There is every reason to believe that the set will be a good one. The piano accompaniments of Romano Romani are adequately played, though his recorded tone is rather on the brittle side.

* * *

FOSTER (arr. Soderstrom): *I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair*; DICKENSON: *Music, when soft voices die*; sung by The Wennerberg Chorus of the Augustana Choir, Henry Veld, conductor. Ten-inch Victor disc, No. 2046, price \$1.50.

■ Foster's *Jeanie* — one of his most charmingly simple songs — is treated here to a typical glee-club performance. Some of the "effects" have a reason—such as the chromatic run under the word *sigh* — and some do not — as for instance the staccato on *light*

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brown hair—all of which is in the best glee-club tradition. Also in keeping is the manner in which the piano accompaniment is outnumbered, though it carries on bravely to the end. The Dickenson setting of the famous Shelley lines is an old favorite with such organizations, and it receives here a good solid, clean performance. The choral diction on both sides is excellent, and the recording is good.

* * *

MADRIGALS, CAROLS, MOTETS AND FOLKSONGS: *It was a lover and his lass* (Morley); *Hark all ye lovely saints* (Weelkes); *Dainty fine sweet nymph* (Morley); *Maidens fair of Mantua's city* (Gastoldi) (Disc 1790); *Sing we and chant it* (Morley); *The Coventry Carol* (Traditional English melody); *Sing we at pleasure* (Weelkes); *Adieu, sweet Amarillis* (Wilbye) (Disc 1791); *O magnum mysterium* (Victoria); *Ave Virgo sanctissima* (Guerrero) (Disc 1792); *The sleep of the Child Jesus* (Gevaert); *All creatures now are merry minded* (Bennet); *On Christmas night* (Sussex carol); *My bonnie lass she smileth* (Morley) (Disc 1793); *Lo, hove a rose e'er blooming* (Praetorius); *From Lyons as I journeyed* (Old French melody); *So ben mi ch'a bon tempo* (Vecchi); *Matona, mia cara* (Lasso) (Disc 1794); sung by The Madrigal Singers, Lee Jones, director. Five 10-inch Royale discs, price 75c each disc.

■ These are not the Madrigal Singers familiar on Columbia Records, but a group of five voices which has been heard regularly on NBC stations, and who recently have been active at New York's WQXR. These five discs constitute their first contribution to recorded music. There is plenty of variety in the singers' first selection, touching as it does on each of the various types of music in the repertoire of this kind of a group. Some of the music is very familiar—some of it inevitable on madrigal programs—and some of it is far too little known. At least two composers seem to reach the wax for the first time—Francisco Guerrero (1527-1599) and Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi (16th-17th centuries). All of the music was worth doing, and recordings of this type are not so plentiful that we can raise violent objections to any of the duplications—except possibly *Sing we and chant it*, which seems to get into nearly every new batch of English madrigal recordings. It is good to have *It was a lover and his lass* done for a change as a part-song, and we may welcome another approach to the *Coventry Carol* (recently released by Victor in recordings by such dissimilar artists as

Elisabeth Schumann and John Jacob Niles). *Sing we at pleasure*, not done, I believe, since the HMV recording of the English Singers, is one of the most brilliant and effective of the English madrigals. Here it loses some of its ring by being put down a full tone (the English Singers took it down a semi-tone). *Adieu, sweet Amarillis* is also welcome, though here it is sung too fast. To me the best singing in the whole collection is in Vecchi's *So ben mi ch'a bon tempo*. In the matter of labeling, it would have been helpful to have had the arrangers' names with the folksong titles. The celebrated Praetorius carol also has been elaborately arranged. The English text used in it is wholly new to me.

I believe that in the course of its career the group has had a number of changes in personnel, which, rather than any shortcomings in the voices themselves, accounts for the absence of a perfect blend in the ensemble. Such "vocal chamber music" is perhaps the most delicate type of musical performance, and perfection can only be the result of long association. In these recordings, although the voices emerge with a naturalness rarely encountered in reproductions of this kind of music, the sopranos seem to be outnumbered. This may very well be a fault of the microphone setup rather than a weakness of the voices themselves. It is interesting for old-timers to note that the Charles Harrison who sings tenor in this group is the same gentleman who used to be so active in recording popular music some twenty years ago.

With the exception of one side, the record surfaces are satisfactory on these discs.

* * *

MENDELSSOHN: *Elijah: If with all your hearts; and Then shall the righteous shine forth*; sung by Webster Booth, tenor, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Warwick Braithwaite, conductor. Victor disc, No. 12609, price \$1.50.

■ A new and up-to-the-minute recording of these two favorite oratorio arias has been needed for years—in fact not since the early electric disc of the amazing veteran Dan Beddoe has a domestic catalogue boasted any version of them at all. Webster Booth, a young Englishman who has consistently and solidly been building up a reputation as an oratorio and opera-in-English tenor, was a logical choice for the task of preserving Mendelssohn's music, and he has done an excellent job. Here is a singer of musical feeling, taste and intelligence, and he gives the arias a broad and satisfying treatment. His *If with all your*

hearts recalls in many ways the admirable acoustic version made by Edward Johnson, and like that disc includes the recitative. *Then shall the righteous* may be found a little too leisurely, but the singer makes up in poise what he lacks in drive. We are not likely to be given a better recording of this music for a long time to come. —P. M.

MOZART: *Requiem Mass*, K. 626; sung by the Choral Society of the University of Pennsylvania; Barbara Thorne (soprano); Elsie MacFarlane (contralto); Donald Coker (tenor); Lester Englander (baritone); with the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Harl McDonald. Victor set M-649, six discs, price \$12.00.

■ Elsewhere in this issue will be found the story of the *Requiem's* composition. The controversies which have been waged over it are really irrelevant to the listener's enjoyment; it is the music that counts and the performance of that music. Here, we have a vigorous and forthright performance, one that is enjoyable despite the fact that the soloists are not first-rate and the choral singing is marked by assertive momentum rather than by tonal nuance. Mr. McDonald, in his training of the young singers that make up the Choral Society of the University of Pennsylvania, has done wonders; it is one of the best choirs of its kind in the country. Unquestionably the motivating spirit of this performance derives from his conducting; yet, at the same time that one feels his intelligence and musicianship were responsible for its realization, one does not feel that his personality obtrudes here over that of his singers. They are the main protagonists, he the directing force.

Mozart in his church music could no more escape his operatic inclinations than could Verdi. Indubitably the dramatic element of the theatre invaded the music. The manner of Mozart's church music has been aptly termed as "worldly-ecclesiastical" (Blom); perhaps this describes the character of his religious works in brief as well as anything else. Although there are strong evidences of this in the *Requiem*, it owns less of the worldly-ecclesiastical than any other of Mozart's church works. The intensely personal expression of the *Requiem* text, and the tragic qualities of it, stirred him greatly; and although he was deeply interested in its composition the agitation and strain of his last illness, during which the work was mostly composed, unquestionably prevented its achievement in a fully satisfactory manner.

The *Requiem* therefore is an uneven work; its inspiration rises and falls. But despite this fact it is a stirring composition; one that ranks among the great pieces of choral literature. The dramatic agitation of the opening movement immediately impresses. The fugal treatment of the voices is forceful and effective. With the entrance of the solo quartet in the *Tuba mirum* begin the passages of heavenly beauty which are heard at intervals throughout the work. These alternate with supplicating drama and a certain conventional ecclesiasticism where the music lacks fluidity and true eloquence. But in the end it is the moments of celestial beauty and heartfelt entreaty that are remembered, and it is the memory of these which will prompt us to return again to the score and this recording.

The recording has been most satisfactorily accomplished. —P. H. R.

RACHMANINOFF: *Tebje pojem* (*We sing to Thee*); and DOBROWEN (arr.): *Stenka Razin*; sung by the Don Cossack Choir, conducted by Serge Jaroff. Columbia disc, No. 7360M, price \$1.50.

■ There is never very much to say about a Don Cossack recording, for the choir has long since set a standard of its own, and whether or not its work appeals is a matter of purely personal taste. There is never any very startling innovation in a new record of theirs—the bullfrog basses and the high falsettists are generally in evidence, and there is every appearance of complete control on the part of the conductor. Not unnaturally the massed tonal effect is likely to be bottom-heavy—and this is true of the latest recording.

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The Rachmaninoff piece has been published in a practical American edition, and is therefore familiar in choirs where Russian choruses are sung. As the Don Cossacks sing it, there are too many "effects" for my taste. The essentially impressive composition does not hang together as it should.

Stenka Razin seemed to me more interesting in the rather rough and unpretentious performance of C. Joukevitch with chorus and balalaika orchestra (Columbia P-406M). That record has a folk spirit which this concert version lacks.

The recording is typical of the best the Don Cossacks have been given.

P. M.

AN ALBUM OF SHAKESPEAREAN SONG: sung by Mordecai Bauman, baritone, with harpsichord accompaniments by Ernst Victor Wolff. Columbia set M-402, three discs, price \$5.00.

■ The title of this set is somewhat misleading. True, Shakespeare wrote the lyrics for all of the music contained herein, but all of the music except one selection was composed at a much later date. As a matter of fact, only one poem by Shakespeare is known to have been set to music by one of his contemporaries. *It was a lover and his lass* appeared in Morley's *First Book of Aires* (1600), only one copy of which is extant. One other song, *O mistress mine*, may have been set to music; a copy exists, but there is a dispute about whether the musical accents actually fit the scansion of Shakespeare's lines.

It is surprising that Shakespeare's musical contemporaries did not draw more fully upon the vast store of lyric poetry contained in the plays and other works. Lesser figures like Greville, Sidney, Davison, Watson, Raleigh, and Jonson were represented in the Elizabethan song books, but Shakespeare, who was more popular than any, with the possible exception of Sidney, was represented only by one poem. Considering the Elizabethan love for good music, and considering Shakespeare's obvious love and knowledge of music, it is a knotty problem, and one that we gladly turn over to the Shakespeare scholars.

Not until much later did musicians set Shakespeare's lyrics. It was especially during the age of Dryden, when many of the Davenant and Dryden monstrous revisions were being produced, that composers were commissioned to set the songs to music. Corrupt and "edited" version of the plays held the stage

for many years, and it probably was for them that Arne wrote those of his songs that are contained in this album. Many other composers during the Georgian period set to music songs from the plays. Represented in this album, besides Arne, are Smith, Stevens, Wilson, and Vernon. Arne's songs consist of *Under the Greenwood Tree* (*As You Like It*, II, 5), *Where the Bee Sucks* (*Tempest*, V, 1), *Come Away Death* (*Twelfth Night*, II, 4), *When Icicles Hang by the Wall* (*Love's Labor's Lost*, V, 2), *Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind* (*As You Like It*, II, 7), and *When Daisies Pied* (*Love's Labor's Lost*, V, 2). Morley's contribution is, of course, *It Was a Lover and His Lass* (*As You Like It*, V, 3). The other composers are represented by one song each: Smith by *No More Dams I'll Make for Fish* (*Tempest*, II, 2), Stevens by *Sigh No More Ladies* (*Much Ado*, II, 3), Wilson by *Take, O Take Those Lips Away* (*Measure for Measure*, IV, 1), and Vernon by *When That I Was and a Little Tiny Boy* (*Twelfth Night*, end of play).

Most of the songs are almost art songs, with nothing Elizabethan about them. The Arne songs are perfect musical illustrations of the age of Pope; anyone who knows the conventional and artificial qualities of the so-called lyric poetry of the age will instantly place them. They are relieved by some gracious touches, but are patently influenced by the oratorio style of Handel, and are heavy-handed settings of Shakespeare's wonderful poetry. The best of the collection are *Where the Bee Sucks* (note the soaring on the word "fly") and the relatively spontaneous *When Daisies Pied*. The Morley song is infinitely superior, and is utterly charming. It serves to make us regret that other Elizabethan specimens of Shakespearean song have not survived, for it is as far above the Arne songs as the poetry is above *Windsor Castle*. Smith's contribution, with the suggestion of a rollicking sea chantey, is agreeable; Bauman might have sung with more characterization to suggest the drunken Caliban. The songs by Stevens and Wilson are period pieces. Compare Stevens' version of the refrain to Morley's, and the difference between a hack composer and a master is instantly seen.

Together with the Morley song, the Vernon setting of the song that closes *Twelfth Night* is the best in the album. Indeed, it is a little masterpiece, and would do credit to many a later composer. As a close to the gay *Twelfth Night*, however, its melancholy strains might have caused Shakespeare to raise a dubious eyebrow. Bauman does not sing the last two

verses, but since it is a strophic song that was not necessary.

The singing throughout is marked by good diction, intelligent phrasing, and good taste. Bauman makes the best possible use out of a rather limited and unresonant organ, and the tasteful accompaniments of Wolff are a valuable aid in preserving the spirit of the archaic music. This set is definitely one to be recommended.

—H. C. S.

* * *

SCHUBERT: *The Omnipotence (Die Allmacht, Op. 79, No. 2)*; *The Wanderer (Der Wanderer, Op. 4, No. 1)*: sung by Lawrence Tibbett, baritone, with piano accompaniment by Stewart Wille. Victor disc, No. 15891, price \$2.00.

■ Lawrence Tibbett is a strong champion of singing in the vernacular, and on this disc he presents what seems to me a good argument on each side of the question. To the non-sensitive listener, whose only desire is to hear words he can understand, the record can be highly recommended, for Mr. Tibbett's diction is superb, and (except for one memory slip) every syllable is given its proper emphasis and value. However, to those of us to whom a song is not simply a melody with words, but a fusion of poetry and music, these excellent performances provide an occasion for a fascinating study.

Of the two songs *Die Allmacht* comes through the more successfully, since by some accident of language the text has taken about as naturally to translation as any I know. The words Mr. Tibbett sings must be familiar to most church-goers, for they are often used in performances of Liszt's choral arrangement of the song. Not only are they grammatical (a rare virtue in translated song) and intelligent, but they fit the music with an unusual fidelity to the poem that inspired it. Mr. Tibbett has touched them up slightly to suit his own purpose, though in this I personally can see little gain. In contrast to this, *Der Wanderer* runs frequently into that kind of forced verse which prompted the old saw that "what is too silly to be spoken can always be sung." Schubert is said to have been able to set a menu card to music, but I am sure he could never have produced a song of the quality of *Der Wanderer* on a text like this. Not that it is a particularly bad translation—it is in every way quite average. Perhaps we are the more conscious of its shortcomings here because of the fine pronunciation the baritone gives to it. Tibbett is in his very best form, and the recording is consistent with the advance Victor has recently

been making in the reproduction of the voice. The excellent accompaniments of Stewart Wille have been caught with more fullness than used to be customary in the domestic studios of this company.

* * *

REYER: *Sigurd: Salut, splendeur du jour*; and *O palais radieux*; sung by Marjorie Lawrence, soprano, with the Pasdeloup Orchestra, Paris, Piero Coppola, conductor. Victor disc, No. 15892, price \$2.00.

■ Ernest Reyer (1823-1909) was a composer and critic whose music and opinions were highly respected during his lifetime. As far as this country is concerned, representation of his works seems to have been confined to three performances of *Salammbo*—reputedly the most spectacular offering of Maurice Grau's regime at the Metropolitan—way back in 1901. The occasion was the presence in the company of the celebrated Lucienne Breval, and the shortness of that lady's stay in America may be attributed to the lack of public success which was the lot of Reyer's opera. Perhaps *Sigurd* would have been a better choice. First produced in Brussels in 1883, it has always been considered Reyer's masterpiece. Possibly the fact that it draws its rather complicated plot from the *Nibelungenlied* has been detrimental to its success since the establishment of Wagner's *Ring* as a staple in the repertoire of every important opera house. If the samples of its music afforded by this record and the admirable Columbia disc of Georges Thill (9147M) are typical, the neglect is unjust, and a revival even today might be found rewarding. This is music in the grand manner of the high noon of romantic opera. It may not be free from the obvious influences of those days—Berlioz, Gounod, Gluck, Spontini and even Weber and Wagner—but it is music alive and immensely impressive, and could hardly be mistaken for the works of any of those men. Reyer knew how to make the voice ride on the surges of a full and colorful orchestra, and to do this without overloading the singer. This Brunhild is as noble and dignified as Wagner's heroine, but she sings music obviously French. The first of the two selections on the new disc is the passage sung by Brunhild on her awakening in Act 2, and the other voices her exalted grief in Act 4 when she finds herself betrayed.

Marjorie Lawrence, to form another judgment from the record, would be the ideal interpreter for the role of Brunhild in a Metropolitan production. The music brings out all that is best in her rich and powerful voice. There is real temperament in her singing.

Happily, too, although she easily caps the orchestra, her voice has not been unduly amplified, and the balance is excellent. Only a lack of fullness in the orchestral tone betrays the fact that this is not a particularly new recording. But the performance as well as the music has vitality and sweep, and the disc well merits this rather belated release. —P. M.

* * *

SKILES: *The Play's the Thing*; sung by Nelson Eddy, baritone, with orchestra conducted by Robert Armbruster. Columbia disc, No. 69819D, price \$1.50.

■ Many years ago the then celebrated Dudley Buck set to music Hamlet's soliloquy, *To be or not to be*. Proving that the inclinations of composers do not change greatly from generation to generation, Marlin Henderson Skiles has now given us another speech from the same drama—the passage beginning *Oh what a rogue and peasant slave am I*, and concluding with the title-sentence, *The play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king*. The setting takes the form of a *scena drammatica*. Freely conceived, as it must be to match the flow of the text, the music relies more on declamation than upon musical inspiration. To have made a great piece of music on this speech (which indeed has music enough in it just as Shakespeare left it) would have required the special genius of a Hugo Wolf or perhaps a Verdi. But neither of these giants would have tackled the job without an urge so irresistible as to overcome the obvious objection that musical setting is here unnecessary. I suspect that Mr. Skiles approached the holy ground in the spirit of experiment, with a desire simply to see what he could do there, or else that he was bent on providing Mr. Eddy with a vehicle—an opportunity, perhaps, to speak the famous lines in song. The result may bring a little more Shakespeare to the millions, but many of us will still prefer to hear the voice of Maurice Evans when we feel in the mood for *Hamlet*.

* * *

A JOHN CHARLES THOMAS PROGRAM: *In questa tomba oscura* (Beethoven); *O del mio amato ben* (Donaudy); *Lord Randal* (arr. Cyril Scott); *Bendemeer's Stream* (arr. Alfred Scott Gatty); *Hérodiade: Salomé! Demande au prisonnier* (Massenet); *Zaza: Zaza, piccola zingara* (Leoncavallo); *Traviata: Di Provenza* (Verdi); *Barbieri di Siviglia: Largo al factotum* (Rossini); sung by John Charles Thomas, baritone,

with Victor Symphony Orchestra, Frank Tours, conductor, and piano accompaniment by Carol Hollister. Victor set M-645, \$8.00.

■ The sponsors of this album have certainly not exaggerated in calling it the finest work Mr. Thomas has done for them. Never before has the voice been recorded with such smoothness and refinement (a notable new characteristic in Victor vocal records) and surely never has the baritone sung with more complete mastery. The music which he has selected to record would hardly be called unusual, nor could we claim that all of it is truly distinguished, but most of it is unhackneyed, and as a collection it is happily free from the kind of song which we are told Mr. Thomas' public "expects of him."

For once we cannot raise violent objections to the orchestrations of the songs in the album, though all save *Lord Randal* are done with orchestra. Somehow these particular songs don't seem to suffer greatly from it. To be sure the already sufficient sentiment of *Bendemeer's Stream* is rather heightened by the strings in the introduction, but this will not bother most hearers. In neither the lovely Donaudy song nor the quasi-religious Beethoven do I feel that violence has been done. (Of the latter it may be interesting to recall, parenthetically, the story of its composition. Giuseppe Carpani, the poet, was well-known as a writer on music and biographer of Haydn. In 1808 a lady in Vienna conceived the idea of publishing a book of settings of this one poem of his, to be composed for her by as many distinguished composers and amateurs as she could interest in the project. Beethoven's was the last of sixty-three entries, his competitors including among others Salieri, Cherubini, Zingarelli, Paër and Czerny. Of course Beethoven's is the only setting which has survived.) But to return to M-645: the opera arias find Mr. Thomas in characteristic form, and two of them reach Victor electric records, rather surprisingly for the first time. *Di Provenza* is already listed among the Thomas records (although not so well recorded as here) and *Largo al factotum* was bound to come from him at some time.

John Charles Thomas is the vocalist *par excellence*. As the possessor of a sure and transparent technique he has few rivals today. Every demand he makes upon his voice is fulfilled with the utmost ease—there is never the slightest suspicion of strain in his singing. A public used to the easy and unvital singing of radio crooners—never gifted as Mr. Thomas is with a voice spectacular in it-

self—has taken this singer to its heart. As I have said above, these records show the singer at his very best, and only to those who feel, like myself, a lack of any really deep sincerity or musical urge in his singing, should there be so much as a hint of reservation in recommending his recital. —P. M.

* * *

VERDI: *I Vespri Siciliani*; *Bolero*; and *Ernani*: *Cavatina*; sung by Miliza Korjus, soprano, with Berlin State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Bruno Seidler-Winkler. Victor disc No. 12603, price \$1.50.

■ It was a happy idea to re-press for American customers this brilliant and sparkling performance of the Verdi *Bolero*. There has not been a soprano in the studios for some time who could do the piece as much justice as does Miliza Korjus. Her singing of it has the right note of abandon, the necessary agility, and more than a little tonal beauty.

The *Ernani* air (the record includes only the *recitative* and the *caavatina*, sung in German) is not first-rate Korjus. There are the usual gorgeous high tones and the heartwarming musicality of the singing, but here the vocalism is incomplete.

* * *

VERDI: *Rigoletto* (Quartet) - *Fairest daughter of the graces*; sung by Noel Eadie, soprano, Edith Coates, contralto, Webster Booth, tenor, and Arnold Matters, baritone, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Warwick Braithwaite; and GOUNOD: *Faust* (Trio) - *Then leave her!*; sung by Joan Cross, soprano, Webster Booth, tenor, and Norman Walker, basso, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Warwick Braithwaite. Victor disc, No. 36235, price \$1.00.

The voices on this record are all young, fresh and good—especially the very English tenor of Webster Booth. This gentleman is a little uncertain at the start of the *Rigoletto*, but he redeems himself quite nobly. There is some faulty intonation on both sides of the disc, principally from the sopranos. The performances and recording, however, have vitality.

P. M.

OVERTONE

After an absence of several years, "Red" Nichols returns his "Five Pennies" combination to the recording scene under the Bluebird label. His first disc contains *Robins and Roses* and *My Melancholy Baby* (No. 10593).

SCHIRMER POPULAR RELEASES

I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE (Field-McHugh); and EASY TO LOVE (Cole Porter). Schirmer disc 511, price 75c.

I GOT RHYTHM (Gershwin) and THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE ME (Reynolds-Kern); Schirmer disc 512, price 75c. Both records played by Casper Reardon and his orchestra; vocals by Loulie Jean.

Casper Reardon has the distinction of being the only jazz harpist in captivity today. (I am deliberately overlooking Adele Girard because I feel she is more a decoration—a beautiful decoration—to a jazz band than a real jazz player.) He began as a straight man and, though it is claimed he can still hold his own in any symphony orchestra, he is now better known for his jazz work. And, in all fairness, it must be admitted his work is distinguished. It may not have the originality of a Johnny Hodges sax solo, or a Basie piano chorus, but it is distinctive and it does strike an attractive new note in jazz.

Several years ago, Reardon appeared as soloist on WABC's *Swing Sessions* and won himself a choice place in the public eye. On those occasions he often played *I Got Rhythm* and *I Can't Give You Anything but Love*. They have become more or less associated with him since then. On these two Schirmer discs he does them again, supported by an orchestra. They sound exactly as they did years ago. These two sides are the best of the four because of the harp playing.

The remaining sides are considerably less interesting, in spite of the good tunes, because of Loulie Jean's very unattractive vocals.

These discs are not real swing but gentle, pleasant, popular music.

* * *

MY MELANCHOLY BABY (Norton-Burnett); and SHEIK OF ARABY (Smith-Wheeler-Snyder). Jimmy Carroll and his Orchestra. Schirmer record No. 7501, price 75c.

■ I'll begin by confessing complete ignorance of the identity of Jimmy Carroll and press time is too uncomfortably close to conduct any investigations. Schirmer doesn't help matters any by not listing the personnel of the band. (The same criticism holds true of the Reardon discs.) However, the disc is distinguished by the slick arrangements which the labels credit to Wilder. Wilder has won himself a bit of fame with his unusual arrangements and popularized his style with his own band under another label. That style is

plainly evident here in orchestrations that lean heavily to the woodwind side.

Neither side swings in the real sense of the word but both have a gentle charm and rhythm. *Melancholy* is spoiled by a vocal chorus by someone who sounds suspiciously like Louie Jean, through the label doesn't mention it.

All three records are well recorded and the surfaces are good. E. A.

SHOW TUNE ALBUMS

GERSHWIN: *Eight Show Tunes* from his scores; sung by Leo Wiley with Joe Bushkin's and Max Kaminsky's Orchestras. A Liberty Music Shop Album, four 10-inch discs, price \$4.50.

RODGERS and HART: *Eight Show Tunes* (arr. Paul Wetstein); sung by Lee Wiley with Max Kaminsky's and Joe Bushkin's Orchestras. Music Box Album No. 1, issued by Rabson's Music Shop, four 10-inch discs, price \$4.50.

■ It is said that Gershwin liked the way Miss Wiley sang his show tunes. Certainly that is not hard to believe after we have heard the young lady in a couple of them. The voice is not a great one, but she knows how to make the most of it, and, what's more important, she can put over a song. There is a sort of comforting sound that emerges from her throat, a nice downy quality with a goodly abundance of vibrato, the sort of thing that goes big with so many folks nowadays. I suppose you'd call it the intimate touch, a manner that gives the listener the feeling that the little lady is singing just for him. Well, it's all to the good, and the recording captures just this quality without exaggeration.

Liberty evidently set a precedent when it brought out the Gershwin album, for shortly thereafter Rabson issued the Rodgers and Hart. The same musicians participate in both sets, and in both cases the recording has been supervised by Ernie Anderson, who also provides some notes for each album.

There is room for agreement with Anderson's statement that "in the thoughtful opinion of some critics it may be the strange fate of Gershwin to be remembered rather by casual works considered of relatively minor musical importance during his lifetime than by the more serious compositions that in his day met with popular success." His assertion that Gershwin's show songs "have never been properly appreciated" will also undoubtedly be shared by many.

Just how far they have been appreciated in this album will depend upon whether the listener is in agreement with all the arrangements. Miss Wiley, with the aid of Bushkin and his sweet and smooth style, sings *My One and Only*, *Sam and Delilah* and *'S Wonderful*. With organ by Maurice, she sings *Someone to Watch Over Me*. This is all "kosher", according to most folks. With Kaminsky (and, of course, his trumpet), she sings *How Long Has This Been Going On?*, *I've Got a Crush on You*, *But Not for Me*, and *Sweet and Low Down*. Kaminsky brings a swing style to his performances. Some Gershwin enthusiasts do not approve of swing applied to his tunes, but we found these four songs thoroughly enjoyable, perhaps because Miss Wiley was the main attraction.

In the Rodgers and Hart songs Kaminsky's cornet plays a very definite part, and his fine musicianship adds to the enjoyment of practically all of the pieces. But appreciation in musicianship does not stop with Kaminsky, for there are also Bud Freeman and his sax, and, of course, Joe Bushkin and his piano. The songs are *Here in my Arms*, *Baby's Awake Now*, *I've Got Five Dollars*, *Glad to Be Unhappy*, *You Took Advantage of Me*, *A Little Birdie Told Me So*, *As Though You Were There*, and *Ship Without A Sail*. Recording in both sets has been smoothly contrived.

—A. L. M.

RODGERS and HART: *Musical Comedy Hits*; played by orchestra under the direction of Richard Rodgers, with vocal choruses by Lee Sullivan and Deane Janis. Columbia set C-11, four 10-inch discs, price \$2.50.

■ Quite different from the Rodgers and Hart album featuring the singing of Lee Wiley is this one with the composer conducting the orchestra. Miss Wiley's album has much of the night club atmosphere about it; this one is in the style of the theatre. The booklet with the set is cleverly made up like a program, and under the caption of Columbia Fireside Theatre, one reads "Beginning any day any where in your own home" and "Performances at and for your pleasure". Very neat!

The orchestra is smooth, the singing reminiscent of the theatre and well done, the recording first-rate. Naturally with two singers there is more variety than in the Wiley album.

The selections here are *My Heart Stood Still* and *Thou Swell*, vocals by Sullivan, *You Took Advantage of Me* and *Do I Hear You Saying "I Love You,"* vocals by Janis (disc 35379); *The Girl Friend* and *Blue Room*.

Where or When and *Johnny One Note*, vocals Sullivan (disc 35380); *This Can't Be Love* and *Sing For Your Supper*, vocals Janis, *With a Song in my Heart* and *Yours Sincerely*, vocals by Sullivan (disc 35381); and *Falling in Love with Love, Lover, There's A Small Hotel*, and *It's Gotta be Love*, vocals by Janis and Sullivan (disc 35382).

* * *

WALT DISNEY's *Pinocchio*; recorded from the original soundtrack of the Walt Disney Film. Victor set P-18, three 10-inch discs, price \$2.50.

Victor's souvenir album of the Walt Disney picture *Pinocchio* is most attractively got up; the appeal may be for the youngster but we'll bet ten to one that a bunch of oldsters will derive equal pleasure from it. Taken from the soundtrack of the film, the selections will recall the picture more vividly to those who have seen it than arrangements made especially for recording.

There are seven selections on the three discs here: *When You Wish Upon a Star*, and *Little Wooden Head* (disc 26477); *Give a Little Whistle and Hi Diddle Dee Dee* (disc 26478); *I've Got No Strings*, *Turn on the Old Music Box* and *When You Wish* (disc 26479).

—A. L. M.

* * *

Artie Shaw, whose return to the band business has been a matter of conjecture for some time, returned to the American band scene early in March with a new and larger orchestra. Shaw's original swing combination of 14 men has been augmented by an additional 13 men. He is recording for Victor at the present time in its Hollywood Studios.

* * *

Fletcher Henderson's brother Horace has been signed by Columbia for a series on the Vocalion label . . . Tommy Dorsey is developing a new trend of "Symphonic Swing" which will be evidenced on his Victor records in the near future . . . At no expense to Sammy Kaye, one of the Brooklyn buses carries a bit of advertising for him. On the painted window near the driver is scratched the slogan, "Swing and Sway with Malky Kay." The Mr. Malky in question is the driver of the bus, and the slogan was scratched by a passenger overwhelmed by the swaying of the bus . . . "For Irish luck and the glory of St. Patrick," says RCA-Victor, "there's a special release of Bluebird Irish records sung by John McGettigan and his Irish minstrels."

IN THE POPULAR VEIN

Horace Van Norman

AAAA—*How High the Moon*, and *A House With a Little Red Barn*. Johnny Green and his Orchestra. Royale 1846.

Whatever the merits of the current Nancy Hamilton-Morgan Lewis revue, *Two For the Show*, may be in general, there can be no denying that it has contributed one of the really outstanding tunes of the season in *How High the Moon*. A number that registers solidly from the very first and does not grow threadbare after repeated hearings, it is the sort of tune that is the best single asset any musical show can possibly have. A practically ideal choice for a number of the type is Johnny Green. His suave, silken treatments suit this superior class of number perfectly and Royale is well-advised to continue indefinitely their present policy of assigning the show numbers to Green, even at the risk of a slight degree of monotony. *A House With a Little Red Barn*, although much more commonplace than *How High the Moon*, is an attractive enough number in a thoroughly unpretentious, "cute" manner, and Green's arrangement is a delightfully slick affair which manages to make it sound a lot better than it really is.

AAAA—*King Porter Stomp*, and *All Star Strut*. Metronome All Star Band. Columbia 35389.

Here is this year's dream band, those glamorous virtuosi of the swing world who have been chosen by the readers of Metronome as the outstanding exponents of their chosen instruments. And a breath-taking aggregation it is, to be sure. There are, in addition to such inevitable choices as Goodman, Teagarden, Barnet, James or Krupa, the rather surprising ones of Benny Carter and Eddie Miller. This is not to deny their eminent fitness to qualify for the honor, but it is somewhat astonishing that they should be known to the general public. On second thought, it isn't so surprising, since Metronome caters to professional musicians largely, and men in the business have an unerring

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sense of what's what in regard to quality performers in their own profession. *King Porter* is mostly ensemble, and amazingly cohesive ensemble it is, too, considering the limited amount of rehearsal time that must have been at their disposal. *All Star Strut* is mostly solos, and what solos they are!

AAAA—*Ev'ry Sunday Afternoon*, and *Nothing But You*. Leo Reisman and his Orchestra. Victor 26533.

● Another Rodgers and Hart musical, *Higher and Higher*, is on its way to town, and, as is always the case with Rodgers and Hart musicals, this one is generously laden with a cargo of lovely tunes. *Ev'ry Sunday Afternoon* appears at this writing to be the song hit of the show, and if at first hearing it sounds a bit disappointingly un-Rodgersish (to coin a singularly ugly word), there is much more than immediately meets the ear, as is also always the case with this vastly gifted composer. Reisman gives it a slightly hot treatment, which is accentuated by a vocal in which the voice of Ol Massa Reisman himself is heard, if these ears are not mistaken. *Nothing But You* is an enchanting waltz, which gives rise to the thought that Dick Rodgers is possibly the only currently active songwriter in America who seems to be able to write a waltz that's worthy of the name. The run-of-the-mill concoctions in three-four, of the *Chatterbox*, *Umbrella Man* genre, are abominations which do not deserve to be called waltzes. But a Rodgers waltz is a different matter entirely and Reisman is the man to play it.

AAA—*La Conga*. Desi Arnaz and his Conga Orchestra. Columbia Set C-12. Price \$2.50.

● With the popularity of the conga on the up grade, an album of them by one of the better conga bands is singularly appropriate. If Arnaz lacks the technical brilliance and tonal loveliness of Cugat, rhythmically his work leaves nothing to be desired, so that from the standpoint of danceability, which is the important one, we presume, these are definitely top-notch recordings. Such prime favorites as *Ferda Tropical* and *Ah, Viene la Conga* are included, as well as many less familiar ones, and the vocals of the personable Arnaz himself grace several of the sides.

AAA—*Tom-Cat On the Keys*, and *Everybody Step*. Bob Zurke and his Delta Rhythm Band. Victor 26526.

● *Tom-Cat On the Keys* is one of the most musically interesting boogie-woogie efforts we have ever heard. Your correspondent is one who finds the average boogie-woogie a thing of deadly monotony. If the combined efforts of Messrs. Ammons, Lewis, Johnson and all their ilk were to be dumped into the Harlem River, it would be quite all right with us. But Zurke, while retaining all the rhythmic excitement of the honest-to-God, dyed-in-the-wool boogie-woogie, invests it with a certain measure of originality and musicianship, and it really helps a lot. We think *Tom-Cat On the Keys* will appeal to the boogie-woogie maniacs and lovers of really good swing alike. *Everybody Step* is Berlin's twenty-year-old tune in a corking arrangement and performance. There is many another Berlin tune of approximately this vintage that would make grand material for the swing bands.

AAA—*Gone With "What" Wind*, and *Till Tone Special*. Benny Goodman Sextet. Columbia 35494.

● These are the usual incredibly fluent performances that we have grown to expect from the Sextet. Count Basie appears in these as pianist of the group and adapts himself amazingly well to the ensemble. In fact, we should say his work is more completely satisfactory than that of any pianist used by Goodman since the departure of Teddy Wilson. It would be manifestly

unfair to single out any member of the group for special honors on this disc. The personality of Hampton seems to loom ever more prominently however in the smaller Goodman combinations and we suspect him of playing a dominant role in the unique quality that they possess.

AAA—*A Little Boy and a Little Girl*, and *Thunder In My Heart*. Eddy Duchin and his Orchestra. Columbia 35386.

● It is a rather charming little number that they have made out of Grieg's familiar *Norwegian Dance* in *A Little Boy and a Little Girl*. Duchin was a practically inevitable choice for recording it, in view of his previous fox-trotted version (without lyrics) of the same dance. It all turns out attractively, and if all adaptations of the classics were done with as much skill and taste, no one would have any kick coming.

AA—*Make Love With a Guitar*, and *On the Isle of May*. Kenny Baker. Victor 26520.

● Once more the boys have tapped the inexhaustible mine of melody that is Tschaiakowsky and come back with a nugget that looks like a sure-fire hit. *On the Isle of May* is a singularly meaningless lyric (not that anyone expects a song lyric to mean anything) written to the theme of the *Andante Cantabile*. No one could possibly do anything to ruin as lovely a tune as this, so it will be enormously popular, despite the dreadful words one is forced to hear sung to it. But if we must hear it sung, let it be sung by someone like Kenny Baker, who is at least a singer in the full sense of the word, and not by the adenoidal tenors and sub-tone contraltos who infest the air-waves.

OTHER CURRENT POPULAR RECORDINGS OF MERIT

(The following are rated from quality of performance regardless of record quality.)

AAA—*Imagination*, and *Say Si Si*. Glenn Miller and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10622.

AAA—*Do You Ever Think of Me?*, and *Jazz Me Blues*. Bob Crosby's Bob Cats. Decca 3040.

AAA—*I've Got You Under My Skin*, and *Crescendo In Drums*. Stuff Smith and his Orchestra. Varsity 8242.

AAA—*Stealin' Apples*, and *Opus Local 802*. Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. Columbia 35362.

AAA—*Parade of the Wooden Soldiers*, and *Turkey In the Straw*. Jan Savitt and his Orchestra. Decca 3041.

AAA—*Dupree Blues*, and *Red Wagon*. Count Basie (Piano Solo). Decca 3071.

AAA—*Crying My Soul Out For You*, and *In the Mood*. Teddy Wilson and his Orchestra. Columbia 35372.

AA—*720 In the Books*, and *So Far, So Good*. Charlie Barnet and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10618.

AA—*Say It, and My, My*. Van Alexander and his Orchestra. Varsity 8172.

AA—*I Hear Bluebirds*, and *If It Weren't For You*. Bob Chester and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10633.

AA—*Darn That Dream*, and *Inconvenience*. Erskine Butterfield and his Blue Boys. Decca 3043.

AA—*Body and Soul*, and *I Didn't Know What Time It Was*. Clarence Profit (Piano Solo). Columbia 35378.

AA—*Lover Come Back To Me*, and *Zigeuner*. Johnny Green and his Orchestra. Royale 1858.

AA—*Can't We Talk It Over*, and *The Blues*. Jack Teagarden and his Orchestra. Varsity 8218.

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